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MARANATHA:

OR

THE LORD COMETH.

By JAMES H. BROOKES,
AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE SAVED," "MAY CHRISTIANS DANCE,"
"GOSPEL HYMNS," "THE WAY MADE PLAIN," &C.

FIFTH EDITION.

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PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

THE Lord has been pleased to own the testimony of this little volume to the truth of His pre-millennial advent, far beyond any expectation of the measure of its acceptance, at the time it was written. Sent forth in much weakness, it has led many to study the teachings of His own word; and thus having learned to "love his appearing," (2 Tim. iv: 8), they are now eagerly "looking for that blessed hope," (Tit. ii: 13). Again is it sent forth with the prayer that He will graciously use it still more, to awaken the attention of His beloved ones to the last promise that fell from His lips, "Surely I come quickly," and to call forth from their hearts the longing response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," (Rev. xxii: 20).

ST. LOUIS, *November*, 1878.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE title of the following work is taken from the twenty-second verse of the sixteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The inspired apostle, after stating that the salutation was given, not by an amanuensis, but with his own hand, adds with his own hand these words of most solemn import: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema. Maranatha." He does not say, if any man hate the Lord Jesus Christ, if any man revile the Lord Jesus Christ, if any man deliberately and persistently reject the Lord Jesus Christ; but if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. A man, then, may be adorned with all the attractions of a spotless morality, or he may be a member of the visible Church, or he may be an able and eloquent minister of the Gospel, but if he love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he falls under the Anathema. He may love his family, he may love his country, he may love the denomination of Christians to which he belongs, he may love orthodoxy, but if he love not the Lord Jesus Christ, says the Holy Ghost, let him be Anathema.

The threatened curse in the fulness of its desolating power may be delayed, but it is sure; for the Anathema is immediately followed by Maranatha, which means, *The Lord* or *Our Lord Cometh;* and he cometh, as it

is elsewhere written, "with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

It may be of some importance, merely for the sake of vindicating the propriety of the title selected for the book to show that *Maranatha* refers, not to a past, (as some who oppose the truth of our Lord's premillennial advent strangely assert) but to a future coming of Christ. In the nature of the case such a question must be determined by an appeal to competent human authority. For the proper meaning of Hebrew and Greek words we are compelled to resort to Lexicographers who are thoroughly familiar with the languages in which the Sacred Scriptures were written; although the humblest disciple of Jesus may also be compelled, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to dissent entirely from their views of doctrine. Gesenius, for example, was a very distinguished Oriental Scholar, and his Hebrew Lexicon is everywhere in use; but when he enters the field of exposition, no true Christian can think of adopting his opinions, for he was an avowed and earnest adherent of the rationalistic or infidel body in Germany that has done so much to degrade and dishonor God's blessed word. The most accurate and faithful translation, perhaps, of the Greek New Testament into English has been made by a Unitarian; but if he should publish a Commentary on the New Testament, it would hold no place in the esteem of those who reverently and joyfully receive the great truths of our

Lord's real and proper divinity, and of His sacrificial death upon the cross, and of the absolute necessity of regeneration by the personal power of the Holy Ghost.

It is perfectly consistent, therefore, to accept the testimony of learned men with regard to the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words, and at the same time to deny the soundness of their conclusions when they undertake to expound the doctrines contained in the Scriptures. If a correct translation of the Bible is presented to us in language we can understand, one Christian has no advantage over another in arriving at a knowledge of the truths it teaches, save as one may be a more devout and diligent student of the word, and more subject to the Spirit, and less dependent upon human tradition for his belief. Hence it often occurs that the poor laborer, working all day with his hands, and having neither inclination nor leisure to read any book but his Bible, has a far clearer perception of the truth as it is in Jesus than many of the most eminent Professors in our schools of learning. The presence of the ever abiding Comforter, the Spirit of truth, to teach us all things, and to bring all things to our remembrance, and to guide us into all truth, was made to all alike who believe in Christ as their Saviour; and to all alike, including the "fathers," the "young men," and the "little children," it is written, "ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" and "the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you."

Without attaching any special value, therefore, to the views of commentators and scholars concerning the doctrine of our Lord's coming, it is necessary to receive their testimony concerning the meaning of *Maranatha*.

Bagster's Greek Lexicon defines it as follows: "The Lord cometh, or will come to judgment."

Robinson's Greek Lexicon gives as its definition: "The Lord cometh to judgment."

Murdock, in his translation of the Syriac New Testament, renders it, "Our Lord cometh."

Kitto, in his Pictorial Bible, says, "On this word we have no fact beyond this, that it means in Syriac 'the Lord will come.' Suppose we were to paraphrase the verse thus:—'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema when the Lord cometh.' Or thus:—'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema: and this the Lord cometh quickly to accomplish.'"

The Religious Encyclopedia says, "Anathema signifies accursed, that is to say, condemned and devoted to utter destruction. Maranatha signifies The Lord cometh."

The Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature says it is a Syriac phrase, meaning "The Lord cometh."

Wordsworth says, "A pause is to be made after 'Anathema.' Let him be accursed: not, however, by man. For, *the Lord* (*Maran*) (*atha*) *cometh* to execute judgment on him."

Alford says, it means "The (or our) Lord cometh," and adds, "A weighty watchword tending to recall to them the nearness of His coming, and the duty of being found ready for it."

Lange says it is the "Syriac for 'Our Lord comes;' not, *he has come*, so that obstinate hatred and conflict with him are all useless, (Jerome.)" To which the American Editor adds, "By translating the expression

in Greek [equivalent to 'the Lord cometh'] we are at once reminded of the epithet, *the coming One* as applied to the Messiah in Matthew xi: 3; Luke xvii: 19, 20; John vi: 14; xi: 27; and also as constantly recurring in Revelation, where the coming of Christ forms the refrain of the whole book, and where at the close John winds up the Canon of Scripture with a reference to the solemn fact, 'He that testifieth these things, saith, Behold, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." Here in fact is the key-note of the Apostle's constant mood. In all the changes of thought and feeling we hear it ever returning; and what is more natural than that in uttering it, he should use the very terms in which the thought was always ringing through his soul? They had acquired with him the character of a solemn formula, for which nothing else could be substituted."

Olshausen says, "The thought 'the Lord comes!' is rather calculated to heighten the force of the preceding thought: Be ye quickly converted, for the time of decision is near at hand."

Bloomfield says, it is a "Syro-chaldee expression, signifying 'the Lord is to come,' that is, will come, to take vengeance on the disobedient and vicious."

Macknight says, "Since the Apostle denounced this curse against the man, who, while he professed subjection to Christ, was secretly alienated from him in his heart, it is as if he had said, Though such a person's wickedness can not be discovered and punished by the Church, yet the Lord at his coming will find it out, and punish him with eternal perdition."

Dr. Hodge says, "*Maran atha* are two Aramaean words signifying 'The Lord' or 'our Lord comes.' It

is a solemn warning. The Lord, whom men refuse to recognize and love, is about to come in the glory of his Father and with all his holy angels, to take vengeance on those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel."

Mr. Barnes says, "These are Syraic words, *Moran Etho*—'the Lord comes;' that is, will come. . . . The Lord would himself come to take vengeance on his enemies; and no one could escape. Though, therefore, those who did not love the Lord Jesus, could not be punished by men, yet they could not escape divine condemnation. The Lord would come to execute vengeance himself, and they could not escape."

Conybeare and Howson, in the Life and Epistles of Saint Paul, translate the verse as follows: "Let him who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ be accursed. *The Lord cometh.*"

Lightfoot says, "And now you may easily fetch out the sense of the word *Maranatha*. The holy Scripture speaks great and terrible things concerning the coming of Christ to punish the nation of the Jews for not loving, yea, hating Christ, and treading the Gospel under foot. It is called 'His coming in His kingdom, in the clouds, in glory,' which we observe elsewhere. So that I should much more readily interpret this expression *Maranatha*, Our Lord cometh."

Adam Clarke says the phrase is Syriac, meaning, "*Our Lord is coming;* that is, to execute the judgment denounced."

Matthew Henry says, "*Maran-atha* is a Syriac phrase, and signifies *The Lord cometh.* That very Lord whom they do not love, to whom they are inwardly and really disaffected, whatever outward profession they make, He is coming to execute judgment."

Scott says, "*Maran-atha* is Syriac, and signifies, *the Lord cometh.* Some Jewish usages are supposed to be referred to; but the above is the undoubted meaning of the passage."

It is surely unnecessary to cite other authorities, for the testimony of the well-known Lexicographers and Commentators already presented is sufficient to establish the meaning of the title selected for the book, beyond question. If, however, any additional proof is wanting it is furnished in the fact that the verb *atha*, of which *Maran atha* is partly composed, is precisely the same in form and tense with the verb found in the twelfth verse of the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah, where we read, "The watchman said, The morning *cometh*, and also the night." There the context shows that the watchman could not mean, the morning *has come*, and also the night, but the morning *cometh*, or *will come*, and also the night.

So when the Apostle writes, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema," and adds *Maranatha*, it is obvious that he refers to a future coming of Christ. The whole force of the solemn admonition depends upon this rendering, for the world was not under a curse as the result of His first advent. His own language is, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." His first coming, therefore, was not in judgment, but in grace, and as long as He is seated at the right hand of the Father the proclamations of redeeming love go forth to the ends of the earth assuring the chief of sinners that "by him all that believe ARE justified from all things," and that through simple faith in His name, without the addition of

feelings, good works, sacraments, or anything else as the cause of justification before God, the vilest of the vile HAVE a present, certain, and eternal salvation. But His second coming will be in judgment, and it is to this the Apostle manifestly appeals as an incentive to holy fear and a warning against indifference to the claims of the once crucified but now risen Saviour, when He says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. The Lord cometh." That His promised coming again occupied the thoughts and engaged the affections of the early Christians, and that it is the great event to which Christians now should look with believing and longing contemplation it is the object of this little volume to show.

MARANATHA.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION STATED.

ALL Christians believe that the Saviour will return at some period, however remote, to our earth. It is a fundamental article of their faith, so universally received it has never provoked controversy, that the same Jesus, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended up into heaven, will, in due time, come forth personally and visibly from the right hand of the Father. It is also a cherished expectation, common to His followers of every name, in every age and every land, that although unknown or rejected by far the larger portion of our race at present, the nations will eventually be led to "crown Him Lord of all," so that the great voices in heaven

can truthfully say and joyfully sing, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xi: 15).

This happy age when His name shall be everywhere known, and His authority shall be gladly recognized, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi: 9), is usually called the *Millennium*, which is derived from two Latin words signifying "a thousand years," just as *Chiliad* is derived from a Greek word also signifying "a thousand." It is so designated principally in allusion to the testimony of the Apostle John who says, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped

the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. xx: 1–6).

Those who believe that the Lord Jesus will return to our earth at the beginning of the thousand years, and reign in person with His saints, were called *Chiliasts* in earlier times, as they are generally termed *Millenarians* now. A more accurate and appropriate designation, however, would be Pre-millenarians, or Pre-millennialists, as those who believe that Christ will not come in person until the close of the Millennium should be called Post-millenarians, or Post-millennialists. There is no dispute concerning the fact of His coming at some time, nor concerning the fact of a Millennium, when truth shall prevail over error, and righteousness shall triumph over unrighteousness, but only concerning the relation of His coming to the blessed period which all His true disciples are fondly expecting.

But just at this point a marked and most

important divergence occurs between Christians whose faith may be one in every other respect. Pre-millenarians believe, as already asserted, that Christ will personally return to the earth at the commencement of the thousand years; Post-millenarians believe that He will not personally return until the thousand years are ended. Pre-millenarians believe that the world will not be converted until the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven; Post-millenarians believe that the world will be converted long before He comes. Pre-millenarians believe that the present age, notwithstanding its boasted progress, will go from bad to worse, terminating at length in the appearing and power of Antichrist who will be destroyed only at the literal advent of Christ; Post-millenarians believe that there will be a gradual and steady improvement in the moral and physical condition of the race through the instrumentality of the Church combined with the discoveries of science and the march of civilization, until what they regard as the present hopeful aspect of the times will be followed by the universal spread and triumph of pure Christianity, as the gray dawn is followed by the splendour of the noon-day sun. Pre-millenarians believe that at our Saviour's coming before the thousand years, none but the righteous dead will be raised

from the grave, who together with the righteous living, changed in a moment into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; Post-millenarians believe that there will be a simultaneous resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, to be instantly followed by a general judgment. Pre-millenarians believe, for the most part, that there will be a literal return and restoration of the Jews to their ancient land, where Israel will become chief among the nations; Post-millenarians believe that there will be a future conversion of the children of Abraham, but are not agreed with regard to the literal restoration. Pre-millenarians believe that at Christ's coming the risen and changed saints will be manifested in their present high character and dignity as kings and priests unto God and his Father, and reign over the earth; Post-millenarians believe that immediately after the general resurrection and judgment, and the condemnation of the wicked to perdition, Christ will return with His people to heaven. Pre-millenarians believe that the earth will not be annihilated but renovated, and remain as a chosen and honored theatre for the everlasting display of the glory of God in Christ; Post-millenarians are undecided whether it will

be totally destroyed, or become, when purified, the heaven of the redeemed.

These are the principal points of difference between the two, although those who belong to either class differ to some extent among themselves upon minor points. It is utterly unfair, however, to present the disagreements that exist among Pre-millenarians upon the unimportant details of their views as an objection to the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial advent; for in the first place, these disagreements are no greater than are found among Post-millenarians so far as they give attention to Eschatology; in the second place, it is only of comparatively recent date that the Church has been reawakened to the great subject, and its discussion is not yet sufficiently protracted and thorough to arrive at entire harmony of opinions; and in the third place, there is more substantial agreement in the views of Pre-millenarians than exists on other subjects between the various bodies of Christians after centuries of agitation. The Confessions that have come down to us were usually the result of sharp controversies, and sometimes of bloody conflicts, that continued for generations before the floating and discordant tenets of the Church were carefully defined and presented in accepted Ecclesiastical Standards. No Christian, at least, thinks

of urging it as an objection to Christianity that Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and other bodies differ so widely in doctrine and Church polity. That they do differ, and on important points, is an unquestionable fact, but it is also a fact that Premillenarians belonging to all of these denominations are in perfect accord with regard to the leading features of their belief, and only differ in relation to particulars of little consequence. Such harmony under the circumstances is very remarkable, and should excite the admiration of a candid opponent, instead of leading to cavils at the want of agreement among those who are looking for the coming of the Lord.

Nor is it fair to meet the doctrine of Christ's pre-millennial advent with objections suggested by human reason, and founded upon the supposed difficulties in which its advocates will be involved. Nothing is more surprising and more painful to those who bow with unquestioning submission to the authority of God's word, than this method of conducting the controversy, so common with Post-millenarians. Recently a very long article from the pen of a distinguished Theological Professor appeared against the pre-millennial advent, and it did not contain a single text of Scripture. There could hardly be stronger

presumptive proof of the doctrine he so bitterly assailed. If any declaration of the Sacred Scriptures can be brought against it, of course it will be valid, and precisely what every lover of the truth will promptly heed, but a thousand objections and difficulties raised by man's ignorance will not have the slightest weight with any one who accepts the Bible as the only rule of faith. A Christian might be asked by an infidel how the eternal Jehovah could appear as a little babe who afterwards died on the cross, how Jesus could feed five thousand men on five barley loaves and two small fishes, how the sovereign, unchangeable purpose of the Almighty can be reconciled with the freedom of human agency, and many such questions; and he would probably reply that he was willing to accept the facts upon the testimony of God without undertaking to explain them.

Bacon describes "the character of a believing Christian" in thirty-four wonderful "paradoxes and seeming contradictions," every one of which in fact contains a self-contradiction in terms, and yet every one of which the believer knows to be true. Let the four following taken from the commencement of the series serve as an example of all the rest:

"1. A Christian is one that believes things his

reason can not comprehend; he hopes for things which neither he nor any man alive ever saw: he labors for that which he knoweth he shall never obtain; yet, in the issue, his belief appears not to be false; his hope makes him not ashamed; his labor is not in vain.

"2. He believes three to be one, and one to be three; a father not to be older than his son; a son to be equal with his father; and one proceeding from both to be equal with both; he believing three persons in one nature, and two natures in one person.

"3. He believes a virgin to be a mother of a son; and that very son of her's to be her maker. He believes him to have been shut up in a narrow room, whom heaven and earth could not contain. He believes him to have been born in time, who was and is from everlasting. He believes him to have been a weak child, carried in arms, who is the Almighty; and him once to have died, who only hath life and immortality in himself.

"4. He believes the God of all grace to have been angry with one that hath never offended him; and that God, that hates sin, to be reconciled to himself, though sinning continually, and never making, or being able to make him, satisfaction. He believes a most just God to have

punished a most just person, and to have justified himself, though a most ungodly sinner. He believes himself freely pardoned, and yet a sufficient satisfaction was made for him."

The objections usually urged against the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial advent may be urged with equal force against the doctrine of salvation by grace, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and nearly every other prominent doctrine of God's word. Indeed it would be very easy to bring strong objections, apart from the testimony of the Sacred Scriptures, against the theory of Post-millenarians, and to pose them with questions which they would find it exceedingly difficult to answer. But questions and difficulties prove nothing on either side, for little children are continually asking questions and proposing difficulties in the way of established truths which the wisest men are wholly unable to meet and remove. The question here is not, what seems to us reasonable, what is in accordance with our wishes, our preconceived opinions, our habits of thought, our accustomed subjection to this and that minister of the gospel or Theological Professor, our pride in the Church to which we belong, but what is in accordance with the plain teachings of the Bible. Does the Bible lead us to expect the general conversion of the

world before the personal coming of Christ, or does it distinctly predict that the manifold evils which now afflict our race will maintain their dire ascendency until the Lord Himself shall return to earth, and that it is our duty to be looking continually for Him as the only hope of the suffering Church? This is the main question to which the attention of the reader is invited in the following pages.

CHAPTER II.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

THE great majority of the Church at the present day dismiss the doctrine of our Lord's second advent from their attention as an unimportant, and, therefore, uninteresting subject. Of course this is owing to the fact that they have been taught not to expect Him for at least a thousand years hence; for if they really believed that He may come, and probably will come, during the present generation, they would at once see that it is a truth possessing momentous importance, and invested with profound interest to every soul. They affirm that practically He comes at each man's death, and beyond this they do not care to push their investigations. The discussion of the question whether He will come before or after the Millennium, or whether He will come in person at all, they regard as of little consequence, since they think it can in no wise affect the duty nor change the destiny of those now living. Hence when they find one here and another there lifting the midnight cry, "Behold,

He cometh," they conclude that it is only the manifestation of fanatical tendencies, and the symptom of an unhealthy and disordered mind. Ministers of the gospel, and especially those who are not noted for the clearness with which they expound the Scriptures, nor for the fidelity with which they hold up the divine person and finished work of our Lord as their constant and animating theme, are apt to say that, for their part, they are content to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and precisely in proportion as they are confessedly ignorant of prophecy, do they confidently assert that the study of prophecy is most unprofitable, and even dangerous.

But surely they do not think of the grievous dishonor cast upon the word of God by this open contempt or boasted neglect of so large a part of the Sacred Scriptures. Surely they do not reflect that they are boldly and blasphemously impugning the love and wisdom of our heavenly Father in giving us a revelation of His will; for if we exclude prophecy from the field of our research in our perusal of His testimonies to man, the Bible becomes a meaningless and worthless book. The first promise made to our guilty parents in the Garden of Eden, casting the first ray of hope into the appalling darkness of the fall, was a prophecy. The bloody sacrifice of Abel and the

acceptable offerings of the Patriarchs were presented through faith in the word of prophecy. The preaching of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was nothing but prophecy according to the statement of the Apostle Jude; and, doubtless, it was largely owing to his study of prophecy that he walked with God, and was not, for God took him. The Pentateuch is crowded with prophecy in type or in language. The service of the Tabernacle and the divinely appointed ritual of Israel are eloquent with the deep tones of prophecy. The historical books of the Old Testament are radiant with the light of prophecy. A very considerable proportion of the Psalms is entirely occupied with prophecy. The whole of the Scriptures from Isaiah to Malachi consists of prophecy. The ministry of John the Baptist was absorbed with prophecy. The discourses of our Lord are filled with prophecy. All the leading Epistles of the New Testament contain prophecy, and the last book of the Bible is prophecy throughout. Not only so, but the pledge of victory we are sure of achieving if called to meet the last enemy that is to be conquered we owe to prophecy. All we have been taught of the resurrection of the body we owe to prophecy. All we have learned of heaven we owe to prophecy. All our anticipations of en-

joyment amid the unfading glories and thrilling raptures of the celestial city we owe to prophecy. All the promises of God's word that remain to be fulfilled in our personal experience, and in the future of the Church, and in the history of the world, are prophecy and nothing but prophecy.

What then do these thoughtless persons mean by their inconsiderate objections to the study of prophecy? Do they not know that if they tear prophecy out of the Scriptures it is like tearing the warp out of the woof, and leaving only shapeless shreds of truth? Do they not know that prophecy, expressed or implied, is found in almost every chapter of the Bible? Do they not know that their own expected Millennium without Christ, their universal kingdom without a personal King, is based entirely on their interpretation or rather misinterpretation of prophecy? If, therefore, the study of prophecy is profitable as furnishing a foundation for their favorite theory, is it not equally profitable in furnishing a foundation on which we can stand in "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" Is it nothing that our Father has kindly informed His dear children of the resurrection and of other honors awaiting them at the second advent of the

Son of His love? Is it nothing that He has revealed to them the inevitable doom of the world which crucified that dear Son, as He revealed to the stranger and pilgrim patriarch the purposed destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Is His amazing condescension in admitting us into the sovereign counsels of His heart to be met with indifference, or returned with scorn? Is it respectful or reverent to say that He has given us a book, a very large portion of which it is unprofitable, and fanatical, and dangerous to study, and that it is of use only after the fulfillment of its predictions to confirm the truth of His word? Does His word, then, need to be confirmed by historical events, before we deem it worthy of our acceptance and belief? Alas! the objections commonly urged against the study of prophecy show where multitudes in the Church have drifted, and to what perils of infidelity they are exposed.

But as it is now, so it has been from the beginning, and so it will continue to be until the time of the end. Disdain of the prophetic word is the chief agency for hastening the world's dread catastrophe. It is a favorite device of Satan by which he blinds the minds of the wicked to the approaching judgments that will

overwhelm them, and by which he deludes the minds of vast numbers of Christians, so that they are perfectly contented with their own unfounded fancies, and do not even care to consult the plain teachings of God's word to discover the real character of the future. Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, faithfully warned those who lived before the flood of the coming rain; and to the ear of faith the very sound of his hammer in rearing the ark would have been an alarming prophecy; but they laughed at his entreaties and despised his warnings. Was prophecy of no importance then? But "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke xvii: 26, 27). If, as our Lord declares, it shall be at the close of the present dispensation as it was in the days of Noah, is prophecy of no importance now? When Jehovah in tender mercy would spare the erring Lot, and sent the angels to cry to him, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed," was prophecy of no importance then? But "as it was in the days of Lot; they

did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed." (Luke xvii: 28–30). If, as our Lord declares, it shall be at the close of the present dispensation as it was in the days of Lot, is prophecy of no importance now?

Inspired men were commissioned to denounce the wrath of heaven against the apostate Israelites unless they turned from their wickedness; but the prediction of coming woe was thought to be of no importance, and its solemn messages were unheeded. As the result of their disregard of prophecy, we read, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that can not be eaten, they are so evil. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and

sending them: but ye would not hear, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxix: 17–19). Were the prophecies of no importance that predicted their partial restoration at the close of the Babylonian captivity, and their complete restoration at the close of the times of the Gentiles? Were the prophecies of no importance that promised the first advent of the Messiah who was to appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and can it be possible that the prophecies are of no importance which promise that unto them who look for Him, shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation?

We are at least certain that however unimportant the study of prophecy may be in the judgment of men, it is of very great importance in the judgment of the Holy Spirit, for it is written, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Pet. i: 19). Prophecy here is obviously to be taken in its ordinary sense as meaning the prediction of future events, and in the language of Wordsworth, "the Apostle compares Prophecy to a *lamp* which guides the footsteps of the wayfaring man in a gloomy, desolate place, where he is not likely to meet

any one to direct him on his way; and serves as his guide in the night and the twilight, till the dawn appears, and he no longer needs the lamp." The inspired writer does not say, as so many seem to think, that prophecy is a dark place which we do well to avoid, but it is a *light that shineth in a dark place*, whereunto we do well to take heed. If, then, we do well to take heed unto the sure word of prophecy, certainly we can not do well if we refuse to take heed unto it, and dismiss it from our minds with the flippant remark that it is of no importance. Again does the Holy Ghost say even of the book of Revelation, confessedly the most difficult of sound exposition of any portion of the Sacred Scriptures, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." (Rev. i: 3). As if foreseeing its neglect at the hands of Christ's professed disciples in modern times, He solemnly pronounces a blessing on every one who reads and hears the words of this prophecy. He does not say anything about understanding it, but only about hearing and reading it, and those who slight it, and turn away from it as an unimportant part of the word, can not receive the blessing.

Again it is written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii: 16, 17). There are multitudes of Christians who have been taught to believe that perhaps one-half of Scripture is not profitable, and all humble attempts to understand it are considered as so many proofs of disagreeable peculiarity or even of fanaticism; but the Holy Ghost declares that ALL Scripture is profitable. From thousands of pulpits a doctrine very prominently set forth in the word of God is rigidly excluded, on the plea that it is not important or practical; but here we are told that all Scripture, embracing of course the prophetical scriptures, *is* profitable. It was chiefly these prophetical scriptures which our Lord had in view when He said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John v: 39). It will not be denied that the portion of the Old Testament which principally testified of Christ is contained in the prophecies; and yet that part of the Scripture which He commands us to search is precisely the part avoided by many of our teachers as leading to dangerous ground.

In the light of these plain testimonies of God's

word it is obviously our duty and privilege to receive and study *all* of that precious word, including its numerous statements concerning the second coming of our Lord. It is not uncommon to hear or read able and eloquent sermons on the text, "whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith," (Rom. xii: 6), and yet in stating the truths to be presented to the people in due proportion, it is seldom that the slightest allusion is made to the duty of looking at the vast number of passages which predict the future appearing of Jesus. Nor can we excuse ourselves from the duty on the ground that the doctrine has been fearfully perverted by reckless men who have mounted it as a hobby, and by their rash predictions brought reproach upon the cause of Christ. It is a sufficient reply to the objection to say that every important truth of the Bible has been more or less perverted, and if the doctrine of Christ's second coming is unworthy of study on this account, so is the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, His atoning sacrifice on the cross, justification by faith in His name, and nearly every other prominent article of Christian belief. Because it has been perverted, there is the greater necessity for its careful examination and clear exposition by

judicious teachers who have been set for the defense of the truth. If there have been unwise predictions uttered by those who are Pre-millennialists, it must be remembered that there have been equally unwise predictions uttered by Post-millennialists, but the mistakes of both alike only urge us to look more attentively and devoutly into the inspired word.

Nor can we avoid the duty of searching the Scriptures on this subject because, as is commonly alleged, it is more difficult to understand prophecy than other portions of the Bible. Even if this were true, the Holy Spirit abides always with the Church and with the humblest believer in Jesus to teach us all things; and if we reverently look to Him for assistance, much that is now obscure will become plain. But it is not true. The language in which prophecy is written is as simple and easy to be understood as any other part of the Scriptures, and all we need in reading it is an obedient and submissive disposition, ready to take God at His word without any theories of our own to establish. Let a believer overcome his natural distaste for prophecy so far as to search the Scriptures prayerfully, with no preconceived opinions, and he will be surprised and delighted to discover the increasing interest with which he will push

his investigations, and the increasing light breaking upon the pages of inspiration that for years, it may be, were dull and profitless reading. The Lord grant unto us all a more intimate acquaintance with His whole counsel, a clearer knowledge of all the glad tidings contained in the gospel, a greater and ever growing familiarity with every part of the holy Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation, that the grace of God which bringeth salvation may appear more and more attractive in our eyes, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus ii: 12, 13).

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S COMING LITERAL.

ALL who have read the New Testament Scriptures with even the slightest degree of attention must have observed the frequent allusions that are made to the second coming of our Lord. Both in the four Gospels and in the inspired Epistles such allusions are of constant occurrence. The common explanation, however, of this admitted fact supposes that these passages do not always, nor usually, imply His personal advent. Thus besides His visible return to the earth at the end of the present age, it is taken for granted by many that the promise of His coming has often been fulfilled in the past in remarkable events, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall of kingdoms; and that it is often fulfilled still in extraordinary providences that directly affect the welfare of nations or individuals, in the special manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power, and in the death of believers. If, for example, the text should be quoted in a sermon, or on a funeral

occasion, "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh," (Matt. xxv: 13), it is probable that nearly all who might hear it, owing to the loose teaching to which they are accustomed, would infer that nothing more was meant than the uncertainty of life, and the importance of being always ready for the hour of death.

It is a question, however, worthy of the most serious consideration, whether we have a right to put such an interpretation upon these numerous references to Christ's coming; for it involves another question of momentous importance, whether we can know the precise meaning of the Scriptures upon any subject. Is the Bible to be interpreted according to each reader's whims, or is it to be interpreted like every other book, by giving to its words their plain and obvious import? No one will deny that it contains figures of speech, symbols and types; but is there no way of distinguishing its figurative language from that which is to be received as literal? If there is not, it must be confessed that it is no longer a *revelation*, but a concealment of God's will, and for all practical purposes it becomes as useless as the ambiguous responses of the ancient heathen oracles.

Greswell, one of the highest of human authori-

ties, says, "It is in my opinion, a dangerous and truly objectionable principle on which to proceed, either in ascertaining the speculative doctrines or in defining the practical duties of revealed religion, to assume that the words of Scripture in a given instance, and with reference to the particular article of faith or moral obligation dependent upon them, were ever intended to mean either more or less than to the common sense of the great bulk of mankind, (for whose benefit and instruction they were intended,) when properly exercised upon them, they appear to mean, or can really be shown to mean. Nor do I know of any way wherein the common sense of the great bulk of mankind can ordinarily be exercised upon the words of scripture, to determine their meaning, except by applying to its language the same criterion by which it judges of the sense of words in general; which is their natural, obvious, and primary construction, according to the rules and idiom of the language or dialect, in which they happen to be expressed.

"To adopt any other method of arriving at the true sense of scripture but this, is to substitute an indefinite and capricious standard of interpretation, taken from I know not what imaginary notions and preconceived opinions of the interpreter himself; and consequently of as many

kinds as there can be peculiar principles and notions of different expositors — all equally arbitrary and precarious, and all equally unsatisfactory to any but those who first set them up and apply them. If there is any one principle of interpretation, which from the nature of the case is not liable to vary; which is founded in the reason of things, and can not accommodate itself to the peculiar tastes or prejudices of individuals, in the use and admission of which persons of every persuasion might be capable of concurring, and which would lead all, if they applied it rightly, to similar conclusions; which is consequently the least likely to fail of the desired effect, and therefore, we may presume, was of all others intended to be our guide and director in arriving at the knowledge both of what we are required to believe, and of what we are bound to practice; it appears to me to be this, that we take the words of scripture as we find them; that we endeavor to ascertain their true, grammatical sense, whether in the Old or the New Testament, in the first instance, and then receive the truths which are thereby conveyed, whether articles of faith or rules of practice, according to the plain and simple and obvious meaning of the language itself." (Vol. III, pp. 171–173).

To the same effect the celebrated Chillingworth, speaking of the inspired writers, says, "Neither did they write only for the learned, but for all men. This being one special means for the preaching of the gospel, which was commanded to be preached, not only to learned men, but to all men. And therefore, unless we will imagine the Holy Ghost and them to have been wilfully wanting to their own desire and purpose, we must conceive that they are intended to speak plain, even to the capacity of the simplest; at least, touching all things necessary to be published by them and believed by us." (Vol. I, pp. 231, 232).

Hooker also says, "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous and delusive than that art which changes the meaning of words, as alchemy doth or would the substance of metals; making of anything what it listeth, and bringing in the end all truth to nothing."

Similar quotations could be easily furnished from the leading writers of various denominations, but it is needless to argue a proposition which must at once commend itself to the acceptance of every thoughtful Christian. If the Bible

is designed to reveal God's will, it can not be intended at the same time to enshroud that will in impenetrable obscurity, nor are we at liberty to put upon it any construction we please. It is written in human language by the agency of human beings, and unless we can arrive at its meaning precisely as we arrive at the meaning of any other book, obviously it is of no real value. Of course there is no reference here to the spiritual understanding or practical reception of its precious truths for which we are indebted to the Holy Ghost, but only to the rules of interpretation that are just the same as those employed in knowing the mind of an uninspired author.

While this principle will be admitted by every one with regard to the testimony of the Scriptures concerning events that are past, strange to say, it will be denied by many with regard to their testimony concerning events that are future. But surely it is difficult to conceive why the rules of interpretation which apply to one class of events do not equally apply to the other. It is difficult to conceive why we should feel that we are on solid ground while reading of that which has already transpired, and that we are on a dark and tempestuous sea without chart or helm or compass, while reading of that which is to come. In either

case we rest upon the authority of God speaking in His blessed word, and upon such authority it is no harder to believe and understand that which shall be, than it is to believe and understand that which has been. As previously stated our great need in the study of the doctrinal, historical, or prophetical statements of the Bible is an humble and submissive spirit ever uttering the reverent cry, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

How do we know that Jesus was literally born in Bethlehem of Judea, that He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that He uttered the sublime discourses and performed the mighty miracles ascribed to Him, that He died upon the cross and rose again the third day? We know it simply upon the testimony of God's word; and upon the same testimony we may know that He is literally to come again. It is not denied that there are tropes and types, shadows and symbols in the Bible, but the question is, are they found in the numerous and explicit statements that set forth the second coming of Christ? What evidence is there that in a single passage asserting this coming, however gorgeous the imagery in which it is placed, like a jewel in a setting of precious stones, the coming itself is to be understood in

a figurative sense? If there is anything in the language announcing the doctrine of His future advent which has a figurative meaning, of course it must be so taken; but this is a different thing from saying that the advent too must be figurative. Certainly it is not very consistent to acknowledge, as all do, that the predictions of the Old Testament concerning His first coming were literally fulfilled, that the record of His personal ministry on earth is a literal narrative, and then immediately to claim that the equally plain testimony of the same Scriptures with regard to His second coming may mean any of a thousand events bearing not even the most distant resemblance to His personal appearing.

We read the predictions uttered by the ancient prophets concerning His first coming, and find that they were literally and perfectly fulfilled even in the minutest particulars; for the place of His birth, His conception by a virgin, His lowly appearance, His rejection by Israel, the characteristics of His preaching and works, His entrance into Jerusalem upon an ass, His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, the smiting and spitting which He suffered, the piercing of His hands and feet, the parting of His garments and casting lots upon His vesture, the offer of vinegar to Him to drink, the manner of His death and burial, and

other details that would seem to us of very little importance were not only plainly foretold but precisely accomplished. It is not going too far, perhaps, to say, that if those who now think that the predictions of His second coming are not to be taken literally but figuratively had lived when the predictions just mentioned were delivered, they would have insisted on spiritualizing them away, declaring that the language demanded a two-fold or ten-fold sense.

Nothing like this is found in the predictions of His second coming. Leaving out the symbols of Daniel and the Book of Revelation that are connected with other events beside His personal appearing, there are hundreds of verses in the Old and New Testaments which assert in plain and simple language that He will come again. It may be confidently affirmed that all of these verses mean precisely what they say, and nothing else; that they always set forth His personal, literal return to the earth, and never in a single instance do they refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the power of the Holy Ghost, or to the death of the Christian as implying and involving His advent; and hence wherever in the Scriptures we read of His coming again, we are to think only of Him, and of His real, actual descent from the skies, as the Blessed One who

having "by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," and "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii: 21).

This statement which may appear very rash to some will be confirmed by a patient perusal of the passages where the promise of Christ's coming is given. It will be impossible to examine every such passage here, but a portion of the Scriptures teaching the doctrine of the second advent may be presented, as a fair illustration of the rest. Let us turn, then, first of all, to the affecting narrative of the interview between Jesus and His disciples just before His separation from them. Observing the grief occasioned by His announcement that He was about to take His departure, He tenderly said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv: 1–3).

Keeping in mind that He was on the eve of leaving His disciples, not figuratively, but literally

and personally, to prepare a place for them, can it be doubted that when He said "I will come again," He meant that He would come, not figuratively, but literally and personally? Is it not certain that His disciples so understood Him, and is it not certain that He would have corrected their mistake, if He thought of one thing, and they of another thing entirely different? Truly we may repeat here His own blessed words: "if it were not so, I would have told you." It will be noticed that He does not make the slightest allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem, nor to the Holy Spirit although subsequently in the same discourse He said He would send another Comforter, nor to the death of the disciples as fulfilling the promise, but He plainly declares, "if I go—I will come;" and manifestly if the "I" in the first clause refers to Jesus Christ personally, the "I" in the second clause also refers to Him personally, and if the word "go" in the first clause refers to His literal departure from the world, according to every sound principle of interpretation, the word "come" in the second clause refers to His literal return to the world. What would you think of a dear friend who, being about to leave you and perceiving your sadness in the anticipation of his departure, should seek to scatter your gloom with the sweet

promise to come again, when he was only speaking figuratively, and really meant something totally different from what he said and from what you supposed? It is needless to say that our Lord could not be guilty of such trifling and prevarication as this, and hence it is a perversion of Scripture to say, as many do, that the promise "I will come again" is fulfilled in the death of the believer.

But that the Saviour wished His followers to understand Him as implying His literal return to the earth is evident from another scene subsequent to His resurrection. He appeared to them on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and after restoring Peter, not to his relationship as a saved sinner, which had not been and could not be lost, but to the conscious enjoyment of communion with the Lord whom he had denied, Jesus said to him as He said when He first called him from his boat to make him a fisher of men, "Follow me." Peter promptly obeyed, but observing John also following, he inquired, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry TILL I COME, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but IF I will that he tarry

TILL I COME, what is that to thee?" (John xxi: 21–23).

It is apparent from a glance at this interesting passage that the disciples understood the coming of Christ in a literal sense, and that they could not have regarded it as fulfilled in the death of a Christian. Indeed it is apparent that they regarded His coming as directly opposed to death in every respect, for owing to His remark concerning John, there went abroad a rumor among the brethren that that disciple should not die, or in other words that the coming of the Lord would prevent his death. Peter knew that *he* must die, because a moment before the Master had signified by what death he should glorify God; but with regard to John there was an impression that he would be delivered from death, because of the saying, "if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" So far is it from true, therefore, that the death of a believer is the same as the coming of Christ, they are not only plainly distinguished, but positively contrasted in the word of God. Paul speaks of "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better," (Phil. i: 23); but to *depart* to be with Christ is one thing, and the *coming* of Christ is quite another; and no man can show a single passage where the two are confounded or

used interchangeably by the inspired writers. But if not so used by them, neither can they be so used by us without a presumptuous and perilous dealing with the word of God.

Let us pass on, however, to the chapter which presents to us the risen Lord leading out His disciples as far as Bethany, and renewing their great commission to be His witnesses in the power of the Holy Ghost unto the uttermost part of the earth. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." This was no figurative taking up, but it was literal and personal. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL SO COME in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i: 9–11).

"This same Jesus," observe, "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," and even the audacity of the most reckless criticism can not possibly torture this declaration into a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, or the descent of the Holy Ghost, or the death of the Christian, or any other event but

the personal return of Christ to the earth. Luke tell us in his gospel that when He was parted from His disciples, and carried up into heaven, "they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy," (Luke xxiv: 52); and surely their joy in their ascended God was kindled to a brighter glow by the promise of the two men in white apparel, who may have been, as has been suggested, Moses and Elias, and who assured them that He, not the destruction of Jerusalem, nor death, but He Himself would come again. Dr. J. Addison Alexander remarks on the wistful gazing of the disciples, "Their astonishment seems to show that they despaired of ever seeing Christ himself again; whereas he had repeatedly declared that he would come again, and in the very way that he had now departed;" and the phrase *in like manner* he says, "never indicates mere certainty or a vague resemblance; but wherever it occurs in the New Testament denotes identity of mode or manner."

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST'S COMING LITERAL.

IT may be well to glance at some of the other passages in the New Testament which mention the coming of our Lord. There are thirty-two Greek verbs which are rendered in our English version by the word *come*, but there are only four nouns that are rendered by the word *coming*. The first of these (*apokalupsis*) is defined in Bagster's Greek Lexicon as meaning, "A disclosure, revelation, manifestation, appearance," and is used in the following places in connection with our Lord's second advent: "Waiting for the *coming* [the revelation, or manifestation] of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. i: 7); "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [literally, in the *revelation* of the Lord Jesus] from heaven with his mighty angels," (2 Thess. i: 7); "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i: 7); "Wherefore gird

up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i: 13).

The second Greek noun (*isodos*) is found only five times in the New Testament, and in four of these it is rendered by the word *entering in*, or *entrance*. In one passage it is translated *coming*, where we read, "When John had first preached before his *coming* the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." (Acts xiii: 24).

The third Greek noun (*elusis*) is used but once when Stephen said in his defense, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the *coming* of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." (Acts vii: 52).

The fourth Greek noun (*parousia*) is found twenty-four times in the New Testament, and in the following places it is connected directly with the second advent of Christ: "What shall be the sign of thy *coming?* (Matt. xxiv: 3); "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the *coming* of the Son of Man be," (Matt. xxiv: 27); "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the *coming* of the Son of Man be," (Matt. xxiv: 37); "And

knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the *coming* of the Son of Man be," (Matt. xxiv: 39); "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his *coming*," (1 Cor. xv: 23); "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his *coming?*" (1 Thess. ii: 19); "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," (1 Thess. iii: 13); "We which are alive and remain unto the *coming* of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep," (1 Thess. iv: 15); "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. v: 23); "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him," (2 Thess. ii: 1); "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his *coming*," (2 Thess. ii: 8); "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the *coming* of the Lord," (James v: 7); "For the *coming* of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v: 8); "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you

the power and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Pet. i: 16); "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his *coming?*" (1 Pet. iii: 4); "Looking for and hasting unto the *coming* of the day of God," (2 Pet. iii: 12); "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his *coming*," (1 John ii: 28).

The other passages in which the word *parousia* is found are as follows: "I am glad of the *coming* of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus," (1 Cor. xvi: 17); "Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the *coming* of Titus; and not by his *coming* only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you," (2 Cor. vii: 6, 7); "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily *presence* is weak," (2 Cor. x: 10); "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my *coming* to you again," (Phil. i: 26); "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my *presence* only, but now much more in my absence," (Phil. ii: 12); "Even him, whose *coming* is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders," (2 Thess. ii: 9).

The reader now has before him every passage in the New Testament where the word *coming* is used in allusion to the future return of our Lord, and he can judge for himself whether it is to be taken in its plain, obvious, literal and personal meaning. By comparing it with the same word used in other passages in a different connection, it is evident that it can not be understood except in a literal sense without a gross perversion of the Sacred Scriptures. When the Saviour, or the Holy Ghost by the Apostles, speaks of His return they always speak of it as a revelation, an appearing, a coming; and the last word when applied to men, invariably denotes, as already shown, their personal presence. If there is a Greek word whose precise sense is established by competent authority beyond room for question, it is the word *parousia* which is defined in the Lexicons to mean "presence, a coming, arrival, advent," and nothing else. When, therefore, we read of the future *parousia* of our Lord, it is shameful trifling with the word of God, for those who profess to be its expounders to tell us that it means nothing in particular, or something as unlike the presence, the coming, the arrival, the advent of Christ, as night is unlike day.

As the result of this long continued trifling, it has come to pass that when a large majority of

Christians hear or read Scripture texts that speak of the coming of Christ, no definite idea is conveyed to their minds, and no suitable impression is produced on their hearts. If the various journals of the country should announce that a foreign Prince was coming to America, and then the recognized expounders of these journals should declare that nothing more was meant than the destruction of some city in the Western continent, or the visitation of cholera, the necessary effect would be that those who had confidence in the expounders would cease to expect his arrival, and they would also cease to expect any trustworthy information from public prints which they had been taught to believe said one thing while they meant another thing entirely different.

When our Lord was on earth He often employed such language as the following: "Think not that I *am come* to destroy the law, or the prophets," (Matt. ix: 13); "Think not that I *am come* to send peace on earth; I *came* not to send peace but a sword," (Matt. x: 34); "I *am come* in my Father's name, and ye receive me not," (John v: 43); "For judgment I *am come* into this world," (John ix: 39); "I *am come* that they might have life," (John x: 10); "I *am come* a light unto the world," (John xii:

46); "I *came* forth from the Father, and *am come* into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father," (John xvi: 28). No one can doubt that the coming here is literal and personal. Of course it is meant in such passages that He Himself, and not something else, had come into the world, and that He Himself, and not something else, would leave the world, and go to the Father.

Then speaking of the Holy Ghost, He says, "When the Comforter *is come*, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," (John xv: 26); "it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not *come* unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he *is come*, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. . . . Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth *is come*, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come," (John xvi: 7–13). Here too it will be admitted that the coming of the Spirit is literal and personal, and so it was at once understood by the disciples.

But we also find Him saying, "Watch there-

fore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth *come*. . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man *cometh*. . . . Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he *cometh* shall find so doing. . . . But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his *coming;* and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall *come* in a day when he looketh not for him," (Matt. xxiv: 42–50). There are many such expressions as these scattered throughout His discourses, and can any one doubt for a moment that He referred to His future literal and personal advent, just as He did when speaking of the first literal and personal advent, and of the literal and personal coming of the Holy Spirit? At all events He uses precisely the same language, and His disciples must have understood Him in precisely the same sense. If He had meant by His coming the destruction of Jerusalem, or the coming of the Holy Ghost, or the death of believers, it would have been very easy to say so; and to suppose that He spoke of His first coming literally, and of the coming of the Spirit literally, and then in the use of the very same words, without indicating any change in His meaning, that He spoke of His second

coming figuratively, only intending by it that armies would fight, or persons die after His departure, is simply to make utter confusion of the testimonies of God's word.

But besides making confusion of the Scriptures, if such a principle of interpretation should be applied to any other doctrine, it would certainly be fatal to the truth, and it may be, ruinous to the soul. If those who oppose the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial advent have a right to say that when He spoke of His coming again He meant the destruction of Jerusalem, the Universalist with as much reason may insist that when He spoke of His coming to judgment He meant nothing more than the destruction of Jerusalem. If the Post-millenarian has a right to say that His distinct and repeated announcement of His future advent is only a figurative mode of predicting the manifested power of the Spirit in converting the world, the Unitarian with no less propriety may claim that His distinct and repeated announcement of His equality and oneness with the Father is only a figurative way of stating that He was a good man. If the plain promise, so often given in simple unadorned language, that He will come back to the earth, is fulfilled in our death, our mouths are shut against the daring impiety of the Rationalist

when he subjects the Sacred Scriptures to the standard of human reason, or rather, of human caprice. If the coming of Christ ever means the destruction of Jerusalem, or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, or the death of a Christian, or any other event but His literal, personal return from the right hand of the Father, it is impossible to know what God has revealed, and His blessed book becomes a mere jumble of ambiguous utterances giving no certain sound upon the subjects that most deeply concern our welfare.

Let us, however, look at a passage which is nearly always brought forward to prove that His coming must have a figurative as well as a literal meaning. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet

tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," (Matt. xxiv: 29–33).

It seems to be taken for granted by many that the last verse, declaring, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," furnishes conclusive evidence of the fact that Christ really came at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. But, in the first place, these brethren do not observe that it was not *at* or *during* the destruction of Jerusalem, but "immediately *after* the tribulation of those days" Christ is to come, and it will puzzle them to fix upon any event *after* the capture of the city by Titus which will correspond with what they conceive to be the strong imagery of the text.

In the second place, they do not stagger at the absurdity and irreverence of making a heathen officer the type of our blessed Lord, and a heathen army the type of the heavenly angels; and even if they can suppose that the darkening of the sun, and the withdrawing of the light of the moon, and the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens, mean nothing more than a violent commotion among the civil and

ecclesiastical authorities of the Jews, they do not undertake to tell us how it was all the tribes of the earth mourned, nor how it was the Son of Man was seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, nor how it was He sent His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, nor how it was they gathered together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, at the seige and overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus and his troops.

In the third place, just before uttering this remarkable language our Lord said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." It will scarcely be asserted that the gospel of the kingdom was preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, previous to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus which occurred less than forty years after the crucifixion of the Saviour. But passing this by, He goes on to say, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: . . . for there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Turning then

to Daniel we read, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. . . . And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days," (Dan. xii: 1–12).

Without undertaking at present an exposition of this passage, it is obvious that neither our Lord nor Daniel could refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, for it is not true that at that time the prophet's people, the Jews, were *delivered* but destroyed; nor is it true that many which slept in the dust of the earth awoke, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, nor was it true that it was "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time;" "a great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning

of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be;" for, as Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, referring to the enormous exaggerations of Josephus, well says, "the assertion that three millions were collected at the Passover; that a million of people perished in the seige; that 100,000 escaped, &c., are so childish, that it is surprising any one could ever have repeated them." The article in the Dictionary, written by the distinguished James Ferguson, clearly shows that the entire force of Titus did not consist altogether of more than thirty thousand men, and that there could not have been more than sixty thousand persons in Jerusalem during the seige and sack of the city by the Roman army. It was no such time of trouble and tribulation, therefore, as that mentioned by Daniel and the Saviour, for it has often been equalled or excelled in the character and extent of its horrors.

It is manifest that they both allude to a trouble and tribulation yet future, of which frequent mention is made in the ancient prophecies, as we see, for example, in the prophecy by Zechariah, who says, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations [not Rome alone, but *all nations*] against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the

houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. [Was this true when Jerusalem was taken by Titus?] Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," [or with Him]. (Zech. xiv: 1–5).

This was the scene which our Lord had in view as His eye swept on to the great tribulation at the close of the present age, and since nothing like this has ever yet taken place, it is not, therefore, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus of which He speaks in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, but of another time of trouble far more terrible. Consequently, the supposition that His

coming occurred then is a total mistake having its origin in an entirely false exposition.

In the fourth place, admitting for the sake of argument that He had reference to the capture of the city by the Romans, those who infer from His language, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," that His coming in the clouds of heaven must have been within less than forty years after the prediction was uttered, might readily inform themselves by consulting Webster, Worcester, or any other English dictionary at hand, that the word "generation" means not only "the people of the same age or period," but "a family; a race; a stock; breed." How, then, do they know that our Lord did not mean, this Jewish family, this Hebrew race shall not pass away before all these things are fulfilled?

In the fifth place if they are familiar with the language in which the New Testament was originally written, they would learn by consulting a Greek Concordance, that the same word which is translated "generation" in Matt. xxiv: 34, is rendered "times" in Acts xiv: 16; "time" in Acts xv: 21; "ages" in Ephesians iii: 5, 21; and "nation" in Phil. ii: 15. It might as well, therefore, be rendered "time," "age," or "nation" when our Lord says, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." The word

"generation" is certainly employed in this wider sense when our Saviour speaks of the unclean spirit going out of a man, and at last returning with seven others spirits more wicked than the first. "Even so," He adds, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation," (Matt. xii : 45) ; where the *moral* condition of the people is evidently the thought in His mind, and not a mere period of time.

In the sixth place, if the word "generation" must be taken in its narrow and limited meaning as embraced within the period of an ordinary life, still our Lord may refer to the generation that shall be on the earth at the time of His second advent, to show that the great tribulation will not last long, but that its terrors will be succeeded by His coming for the deliverance of His people and the gathering together of His elect, all within the space of a few brief years.

In the seventh place, in an able paper on Eschatology, which appeared some years since, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, it was conclusively shown, by numerous quotations, that the word translated "fulfilled" was often employed to express the fact that an event only *began* to be fulfilled without denoting its completion ; so that if we are compelled to retain the usual sense of the word "generation," our Saviour may only

have intended to say, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things [the predicted desolations of Israel, terminating with His second coming,] *begin* to be fulfilled."

Thus there are various ways of viewing this well known passage, any one of which is far more satisfactory than the unutterable absurdity of supposing that at or after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the sun was darkened, and the moon did not give her light, and the stars fell from heaven, and the powers of the heavens were shaken, and all the tribes of the earth mourned, and the Son of Man was seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and the angels were sent forth with a great sound of a trumpet, and the elect were gathered from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The truth is that in no sense did Christ come at the destruction of Jerusalem, but that event was a faint and shadowy type of a far more terrific woe which will cast its deep gloom over the close of the present dispensation. In no sense did Christ come in the descent of the Holy Spirit, but the gift of the Spirit was consequent, and depended upon, the departure of Christ, and the personal presence of the one is the positive proof of the personal absence of the other. In no sense does Christ

come at the death of the believer, but in the few instances in which death is mentioned in the New Testament it is carefully distinguished from the coming of Him "who hath abolished death," [2 Tim. i: 10], "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," (Heb. ii: 14, 15). In no sense has Christ ever come since a cloud received Him out of the sight of His disciples at Bethany, except that in His divine nature He is necessarily everywhere present, and is pleased to manifest the tokens of that presence where two or three are met together in His name, and to be with His followers alway, even to the end of the age. It is true that He is with them by His Spirit at death, but in this sense He is also with them all the time from the moment of their regeneration by faith in His name, so that when they die it can not be said that He comes to them; for, instead of coming to them, they depart to be in His presence, which is far better than to be here.

An old Scotch minister said, that in visiting his congregation, he found three great evils: a misunderstanding of Scripture; a misapplication of Scripture; and a dislocation of Scripture. Those who refer the testimony of Scripture

concerning the second coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the office of the Spirit, or to the death of the believer, or to any other event whatever save the literal, personal return of Lord, are under the control of all these evils combined. They divest a most important doctrine of all meaning and power, and it has come to pass that a truth held forth on almost every page of God's word scarcely exerts the slightest practical influence over the hearts and lives of the great body of professing Christians, because it is supposed to mean anything or nothing according to the fancies of each particular preacher or reader.

But it may be asked whether, according to this principle of literal interpretation, we are not forced to believe that the Saviour and His Apostles spoke of His coming as possible even in the days of the first disciples, and whether these first disciples did not look for Him before they fell asleep? Undoubtedly they did: and it is this fact which throws a flood of light upon the blessed hope before us in its bearing upon the daily walk of the believer. The attentive and candid student of the Scriptures can not avoid the conviction that from the time our Lord was taken up from the midst of His friends, they waited and watched for His appearing again,

and when they went down into the grave, they left their believing and longing expectation as a precious legacy to those coming after them. The Thessalonians, for example, are described as those who had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i: 9, 10). This can not possibly mean that they waited for the destruction of Jerusalem, for they had, in their distant home, no interest in that event; nor can it mean that they waited for the Holy Ghost, for He had already come; nor can it mean that they waited for death, for death had not been raised from the dead, and it had not delivered them from the wrath to come; but it means precisely what it says, that these first Christians waited for Jesus to come from heaven.

He had said to His disciples, when speaking of His second advent, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," (Matt. xxiv: 36). In the Gospel according to Mark, where the Saviour is specially presented in the character of a servant, predicted by the prophets, it is said, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but

the Father," (Mark xiii : 32) ; concerning which Dr. Alexander, in his Commentary, remarks, "That such a declaration should be made at all, is wonderful enough, but scarcely credible on any supposition, or in any sense, if made in reference to the date of the destruction of Jerusalem." After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples asked of Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He did not intimate in His reply that they were mistaken in expecting at any time the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but "He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," (Acts i : 7).

Thus the Father has guarded most carefully against the possibility of our knowing the precise time of our Lord's return, and this for a manifest reason. He wishes it to be the radiant object of Christian hope, because while it engages our constant attention, it will separate us from entangling alliances with the world, and uphold us amid its conflicts, and keep us in close and endeared communion with Himself. If the slightest hint had been given to the early disciples that the Saviour would not return for centuries, we can hardly imagine how disastrous would have been the effect upon their zeal in proclaim-

ing the glad tidings of the gospel, and their patience amid sore persecutions, and their holy contempt of earthly honors and pleasures. Hence it was not revealed even to the Apostles when He will come again, but they were themselves taught, and instructed to teach others, to look for Him continually. It is needless to say that the blessed Lord practiced no deception upon them, for they were not told that He would come in their day; but as the Church in all ages constitutes the one body and bride of Christ, it is the proper attitude of the bride to be always waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find it written, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," (Heb. x: 36), and "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v: 8). Three times, in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly;" "And, behold, I come quickly;" "Surely, I come quickly." What God's views of "a little while" and "quickly" may be, when we know "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," (2 Pet. iii: 8), is not the question; but although the time of our Lord's coming was not revealed to the Apostles, the fact of His coming was so communicated to them, and by them to

us, that the becoming posture of the believing soul in each succeeding generation of the Church is to look for the advent of Christ as possible every hour, as not improbable any hour.

"Surely I come quickly" were the very last words which fell from His lips; but, alas, what vast multitudes of His disciples have ceased to expect Him, and perhaps, it is not uncharitable to add, have ceased to desire Him! If a dear friend whose absence has left "an aching void" in the heart should write to inform us that He would come again to satisfy our longing with his presence, but omit to state in his letter when he would return, we would look for him day after day, and week after week, and month after month with unflagging desire until his arrival. In like manner, when we hear the sweet promise, "Surely I come quickly," if we are what and where we ought to be, the eager response will go forth from our lips, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus;" for if true Christians, "our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," (Phil. iii: 20, 21).

"Hark! the cry, "Behold, He cometh!"
Hark! the cry, "The Bridegroom's near!"
These are accents falling sweetly
On the ransomed sinner's ear.

"Many disbelieve the tidings,
Or in anger turn away;
'Tis foretold there shall be scoffers,
Rising in the latter day.

"But He'll come, the Lord from heaven,
Not to suffer or to die;
But to take His waiting people
To their glorious rest on high.

"Happy they who stand expecting
Christ, the Saviour, to appear:
Sad for those who do not love Him;
Those who do not wish Him here."

CHAPTER V.

POST-MILLENNIAL TESTIMONY.

THAT the view here presented of the literal coming of Christ and the expectation of the first Christians is correct is admitted by Post-millenarians themselves. These admissions will doubtless surprise the reader if he has given no attention to the subject, and they are offered at this point in the argument, with the hope of awakening attention to a precious but sadly neglected truth. It is to be feared that very many are accustomed to bow with unquestioning submission to the authority of Commentators and of eminent Theologians, especially of their own Church; and that very few are like the Bereans whom the Holy Ghost commends as "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so," (Acts xvii: 11). If any of the former class are led to look over these pages it may possibly excite their interest to see what is said concerning the second coming of the Lord by some of the

most popular writers who are looking for the conversion of the world before His personal return.

Dr. Charles Hodge, commenting on the words, "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. i : 7), says ; " *Waiting*, *patiently* expecting, compare 1 Pet. iii : 20, or expecting with desire, i. e., longing for. Compare Rom. viii : 19, 20, 23. The object of this patient and earnest expectation of believers is the *coming*, i. e., *the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The second advent of Christ, so clearly predicted by himself and by his Apostles, connected as it is with the promise of the resurrection of his people and the consummation of his kingdom, *was the object of longing expectation to all the early Christians.* So great is the glory connected with that event that Paul, in Rom. viii : 18–23, not only represents all present afflictions as trifling in comparison, but describes the whole creation as looking forward to it with earnest expectation. Compare Phil. iii : 20. Tit. ii : 13. *So general was this expectation* that Christians were characterized as those 'who love his appearing,' 2 Tim. iv : 8, and as those 'who wait for him,' Heb. ix : 28. Why is it that this longing for the coming of Christ is awakened in the hearts of his people? The Apostle answers this question by saying that

the first fruits of the Spirit' enjoyed by believers in this life are an earnest, that is, a foretaste and pledge, of those blessings which they are to receive in their fulness at the second advent. The Spirit, therefore, awakens desire for that event. See Rom. viii: 23. Eph. i: 14. The same truth is here implied. The Corinthians had received largely the gifts of the Spirit: the consequence was they waited with patience and desire for the revelation of Christ, when they should enter on that inheritance of which those gifts are the foretaste and pledge. If the second coming of Christ is to Christians of the present day less an object of desire than it was to their brethren during the apostolic age, it must be because they think the Lord is 'slack concerning his promise,' and forget that with him a thousand years is as one day."

Here Dr. Hodge declares that the second advent of Christ was the object of longing expectation to all the early Christians. Is it so now? Of course it will be replied by some that it is; but notoriously it is not. What! *that* an object of longing expectation to which no allusion is ever made in sermons, or in private conversation? *That* an object of longing expectation, the bare mention of which in a public discourse or in the public prints is regarded as a token of

disagreeable eccentricity, if not of positive aberration of mind? *That* an object of longing expectation which will place the man who holds it under the ban of popular opinion in any Church in the land? Nay; nay; Christians at the present day may have a longing expectation of reaching heaven after death, but it is glaringly untrue to affirm that the second advent of Christ is now the object of longing expectation to the great mass of those who profess to be His disciples. Let the consciousness of those who deny His pre-millennial advent, and let the observation of all decide whether Christians as a rule are looking with eager desire for His personal return.

Mr. Barnes, commenting on the text, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," (Phil. iii: 20), says, "That is, it is one of the characteristics of the Christian that he believes that the Lord Jesus will return from heaven, and that he looks and waits for it. Other men do not believe this, (2 Pet. iii: 4), but the Christian confidently expects it. His Saviour has been taken away from the earth, and is now in heaven, but it is a great and standing article of his faith that that same Saviour will again come, and take the believer to himself. See Notes on John xiv: 2, 3. 1 Thess. iv: 14. *This was the firm belief*

of the early Christians, and this expectation with them was allowed to exert a constant influence on their hearts and lives. It led them (1) to desire to be prepared for his coming; (2) to feel that earthly affairs were of little importance, as the scene here was soon to close; (3) to live above the world, and in the desire of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. This was one of the elementary doctrines of their faith, and one of the means of producing deadness to the world among them; *and among the early Christians there was, perhaps, no doctrine that was more the object of firm belief, and the ground of more delightful contemplation, than that their ascended Master would return.* In regard to the certainty of their belief on this point, and the effect which it had on their minds, see the following texts of the New Testament. Matt. xxiv: 42, 44. Luke xii: 37. John xiv: 3. Acts i: 11. 1 Cor. iv: 5. Col. iii: 4. 1 Thess. ii: 19. 2 Thess. ii: 1. Heb. x: 37. James v: 7, 8. 1 John iii: 2. Rev. xxii: 7, 12, 20. It may be asked, with great force, whether Christians in general have now any such expectation of the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, or whether they have not fallen into the dangerous error of prevailing unbelief, so that the expectation of his coming is allowed to exert almost no influence

on the soul. In the passage before us, Paul says that it was one of the distinct characteristics of Christians that they *looked for* the coming of the Saviour from heaven. They believed that he would return. They anticipated that important effects would follow to them from his second coming. So *we* should look."

Hackett, a distinguished Baptist Commentator, remarks, on the passage, "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you," [Acts iii: 20], "Nearly all critics understand this passage as referring to the return of Christ at the end of the world. The similarity of the language to that of other passages which announce that event, demands this interpretation. The Apostle enforces his exhortation to repent by an appeal to the final coming of Christ, not because he would represent it as near in point of time, but because that event was always *near to the feelings and consciousness* of the first believers. [The italics are his]. It was the great consummation on which the strongest desires of their souls were fixed, to which their thoughts and hopes habitually turned. They lived in expectation of it; they labored to be prepared for it; they were constantly, in the expressive language of Peter, *looking for and hastening unto it*. It is then that Christ will reveal himself in glory,

will come 'to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel, and to be admired in all them who believe;' will raise the dead, invest the redeemed with an incorruptible body, and introduce them for the first time, and for ever, into the state of perfect holiness and happiness prepared for them in his kingdom. The Apostles, the first Christians in general, comprehended the grandeur of that occasion; it filled their circle of view, stood forth to their contemplations as the point of culminating interest in their own and the world's history, threw into comparative insignificance the present time, death, all intermediate events, and made them feel that the manifestation of Christ, with its consequences of indescribable moment to all true believers, was the grand object which they were to keep in view as the end of their toils, the commencement and perfection of their glorious immortality. In such a state of intimate sympathy with an event so habitually present to their thoughts, they derived, they must have derived, their chief incentives to action from the prospect of that future glory; they hold it up to the people of God to encourage them in affliction, to awaken them to fidelity, zeal, and perseverance, and appeal to it to warn the wicked, and impress upon them the necessity of preparation for the revelation of that day; for

examples of this, compare xvii: 30, 31; 1 Tim. vi: 13; 2 Tim. iv: 8; Tit. ii: 11; 2 Pet. iii: 11, etc. Some have ascribed the frequency of such passages in the New Testament to a definite expectation on the part of the Apostles that the personal advent of Christ was nigh at hand; but such a view is not only unnecessary, in order to account for such references to the day of the Lord, but at variance with 2 Thess. ii: 2. [That he is wrong here will be clearly shown]. The Apostle Paul declares there, that the expectation in question was unfounded, and that he himself did not entertain it or teach it to others. But while he corrects the opinion of those at Thessalonica who imagined that the return of Christ was then near, neither he nor any other inspired writer has informed us how remote that event may be, or when it will take place. That is a point which has not been revealed to men; the New Testament has left it in a state of uncertainty. 'The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night;' and men are exhorted to be always prepared for it. It is to be acknowledged that most Christians, at the present day, do not give that prominence to the resurrection and the judgment, in their thoughts or discourse, which the New Testament writers assign them; but this fact is owing, not necessarily to a difference

of opinion in regard to the time when Christ will come, but to our inadequate views and impressions concerning the grandeur of that occasion, and the too prevalent worldliness in the church, which is the cause or consequence of such deficient views. If modern Christians sympathized more fully with the sacred writers on this subject, it would bring both their conduct and their style of religious instruction into nearer correspondence with the lives and teaching of the primitive examples of our faith."

Trench, a well known and accomplished Episcopal writer, remarks, on the parable of the Ten Virgins, "When it is said in the parable that the bridegroom did actually tarry, we may number this among the many hints, which were given by our Lord, that it was possible the time of his return might be delayed beyond the expectation of his first disciples. It was a hint and no more; if more had been given, if the Lord had said plainly that he would not come for many centuries, then the first ages of the Church would have been placed in a disadvantageous position, *being deprived of that powerful motive to holiness and diligence supplied to each generation of the faithful, by the possibility of the Lord's return in their time.* It is not that he desires each succeeding generation to believe

that he will certainly return in their time, for he does not desire our faith and our practice to be founded on an error, as, in that case, the faith and practice of all generations except the last would be. *But it is a necessary element of the doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ, that it should be possible at any time, that no generation should consider it improbable in theirs.* The love, the earnest longing of those first Christians made them to assume that coming to be close at hand."

Similar testimony could be quoted from a number of writers, who teach that although eighteen hundred years have passed since the first Christians looked for the personal return of our Lord to the earth, Christians now should not expect Him for at least a thousand years; and thus exert all their great influence to divert attention from a precious truth which they themselves are forced to acknowledge shines forth in the New Testament as the resplendent object of the believer's hope. But it is needless to quote from others after presenting the testimony of Dr. David Brown, the great post-millennial authority, whose book "On The Second Advent" is claimed by his admirers to be unanswerable. If Christians would practically receive the statements from his pen that

follow, nothing more could be desired by those who are raising their voice in defence of a grand but almost forgotten doctrine of God's word. These statements are here given in the precise form in which they are found in his work.

"Are there no *anti*-premillennial tendencies," he asks, "which require to be guarded against? I think there are. Under the influence of such tendencies, the inspired text, as such, presents no rich and exhaustless field of prayerful and delightful investigation; exegetical inquiries and discoveries are an uncongenial element; and whatever Scripture intimations regarding the future destinies of the Church and of the world involve events out of the usual range of human occurrences, or exceeding the anticipations of enlightened Christian sagacity, are almost instinctively overlooked or softened down."—[Page 9].

"Nor let any one ask, Of what consequence is it whether the one opinion or the other be the correct one? For if this be what the Spirit has seen fit so specially to reveal, it must be worthy of being held fast by us; and whatever view we take of it will necessarily give its hue to all other statements of Scripture regarding the earth."—[Page 11].

"Pre-millennialists have done the Church a

real service, by calling attention to the place which the second advent holds in the word of God and the scheme of divine truth. If the controversy which they have raised should issue in a fresh and impartial inquiry into this branch of it, I, for one, instead of regretting, shall rejoice in the agitation of it. When they dilate upon the prominence given to this doctrine in Scripture, and the practical uses which are made of it, they touch a chord in the heart of every simple lover of his Lord, and carry conviction to all who tremble at his word; so much so, that I am persuaded nine-tenths of all who have embraced the pre-millennial view of the second advent, have done so on the supposition that no other view of it will admit of an unfettered and unmodified use of the Scripture language on the subject—that it has its proper interpretation and full force only on this theory."—[Page 13].

"With them we affirm, that the REDEEMER'S SECOND APPEARING IS THE VERY POLE-STAR OF THE CHURCH. That it is so held forth in the New Testament, is beyond dispute. Let any one do himself the justice to collect and arrange the evidence on the subject, and he will be surprised —if the study be new to him—at once at the copiousness, the variety, and the conclusiveness of it."—[Page 14].

"Delightful thought! that the close of the believer's career is to be regarded as merging in the solemnities of the second advent—that the beams of his Lord's glory should be seen brightening the horizon of his present abode. The last companies of the disciples shall be sitting, perchance, at his table—their hearts burning within them, as the bleeding love of his *first* advent rises before their view, and longing for the daybreak of his *second* appearing. They scarce venture to hope that the time for the flight of the shadows has come. Yet remembering those endeared words, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come,' the question steals across them, What if it should be even now? Scarcely has the thought taken possession of them, when, lo! a strange sensation is felt by them all. The spirit of each glows and brightens as never it had done before. Each looks to his fellow, as if to ask, What is this? It is 'THE DAY-STAR ARISING IN THEIR HEARTS! (2 Pet. i: 19). In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, their Lord is with them! It is himself. He has come at last, in the glory of his second appearing, and themselves and the poor earthly tables at which they sit are transfigured into shining guests and a table never to be drawn!

"There is still another class of texts—the most delightful, perhaps, of all, and certainly the most telling upon the heart—in which the *widowed* condition and feeling of the Church, while our Lord is absent from her in the heavens, are brought to view. And from whom do we get this idea in its perfection? Is it from the Apostles expressing the feeling which his absence created in the hearts of his loving people? No; it is from Christ himself, intimating what he expected at their hands—*taking it for granted* that they would not be able to do without him. . . . Would it be incongruous in the Church to mourn and feel desolate in the *presence* of her Lord? Not less incongruous, it seems, is it *not* to cherish the feeling of desolation in his *absence*. . . . Written communications and tokens of affection from the absent one are dear to affection—but only when himself can not be had. Christ's word, and the seals of his love conveyed to our hearts by the blessed Spirit, are inexpressibly dear to his loving people—but only in the absence of himself. And never do we please Christ so much as when we 'refuse to be comforted,' even with his own consolations, save in the prospect of *his Personal Return*."—[Pages 17–19].

Then, after showing conclusively that the coming of Christ can not possibly mean death,

he says, "To put the expectation of one's own death in place of the prospect of Christ's appearing, is to dislocate a beautiful jointing in divine truth—to destroy one of its finest collocations. Here it is, as expressed by the Apostle: 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' [Tit. ii: 11–14]. Here both comings of Christ are brought together; the first in 'grace'—the second in 'glory'; the first 'bringing salvation'—the second, to complete the salvation brought. To the first we look *back* by *faith*—to the second we look *forward* by *hope*. In the enjoyment of the fruit of the first, we anticipate the fulness of the second. Between these two the Apostle here beautifully places the Christian's present holy walk. These are the two *pivots* on which turns the Christian's life—the two *wings* on which believers mount up as eagles. If either is clipped, the soul's flight heavenward is low, feeble, and fitful.

This is no casual collocation of truths. It is a studied, and with the Apostle, a favorite juxtaposition of the two greatest events in the Christian redemption, the *first* and the *last*, bearing an intrinsic relation in their respective objects."—[Pages 23, 24].

After making such remarkable admissions as these throughout the book, at the close he says, "Nor is it in regard to the personal appearing of the Saviour only that pre-millennialists will and ought to prevail against all who keep it out of sight. There is *a range of truth* connected with it, which necessarily sinks out of its scriptural position and influence, whenever the coming of Christ is put out of its due place. I refer to the RESURRECTION as a co-ordinate object of the Church's hope, and to all the truths which circle around it, in which there is a power to stir and to elevate, which nothing else, substituted for it, can ever possess. The resurrection life of the Head, as now animating all his members, and at length quickening them from the tomb, to be for ever with him—these, and such like, are truths, in the presentation of which pre-millennialists are cast in the mould of Scripture, from which it is as vain as it were undesirable to dislodge them."

CHAPTER VI.

PROMINENCE OF THE DOCTRINE.

BICKERSTETH affirms, after careful examination, that one verse in thirty of the New Testament relates to the second coming of Christ. If to these are added the numerous references in the Old Testament to the same momentous event, surpassing the allusions that are made to His first coming in the proportion of at least twenty to one, some conception may be formed of the prominence given in the word of God to the doctrine here advocated. The fact that a certain subject pervades the Sacred Scriptures is sufficient to indicate the high value placed upon it by the Holy Ghost, who dictated to inspired men precisely what to write. When, for example, we find the doctrine of our Lord's divinity constantly asserted, and the doctrine of redemption through His blood running through Revelation from first to last, and the doctrine of faith in His name stated more than five hundred times by Christ Himself and the Apostles, it is legitimate to infer that these truths are

regarded as of special importance by the Spirit of God.

What shall we say, then, when we discover that one verse of thirty in the New Testament is occupied about the second coming of our Lord? Can it be right to neglect such a truth? Can it be right to banish it from our thoughts, our social circles, and our public discourses as a forbidden topic? Can it be right to speak of those who love His appearing as eccentric, and as engaged in disseminating extravagant and unprofitable views? Alas! that they are eccentric is too true, but this only proves the lamentable condition into which the Church has drifted; for if it can be shown that a doctrine everywhere found in the Bible is overlooked or ridiculed by a majority of Christians, at the present day, we need no other evidence to convince us of their departure from the faith in one important particular. But how many Christians of the present day have ever heard a single statement of the doctrine of our Lord's second coming? They may have listened to occasional sermons about the judgment, but let the reader determine for himself whether he has been accustomed to hear from the pulpits of the various ecclesiastical organizations the slightest mention of the personal return of Jesus Christ as the proper hope of the Church.

In contrast with this melancholy silence concerning our blessed hope, let us glance at the testimony of our Lord and His Apostles. Scattered through the discourses of the former we find such declarations as the following: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works," (Matt. xvi: 29); "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Matt. xix: 28); "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be," (Matt. xxiv: 27); "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," (Matt. xxiv: 30); "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and

took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be," (Matt. xxiv: 36–39); "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," (Matt. xxiv: 42); "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods," (Matt. xxiv: 44–47); "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," (Matt. xxv: 31); "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," (Matt. xxvi: 64).

These quotations are from Saint Matthew alone, and they are far from exhausting all the references made in that single gospel to the coming of our Lord. Nearly the whole of the thirteenth, and the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters are filled almost exclusively with statements touching the entire character and course of the present dispensation, terminating with the personal advent of Christ, and bearing upon

that advent as the end to which the disciples should constantly look. Contrast the fulness and frequency of His allusions to His second coming with His silence concerning the Church and baptism, the former of which He mentioned but twice incidentally, and the latter only once, and that after His resurrection. Then contrast the prominence that is given in these days to the Church and baptism with the total silence which prevails in thousands of pulpits concerning the second coming of our Lord: and it will be seen that the faith of multitudes is sadly out of proportion to the teachings of the Saviour. It is to be feared that the Church and baptism are too often substituted in the place of Christ, and this may explain why the heart so feebly responds to the blessed promise of His coming.

Passing by testimony upon the same subject that can be found abundantly in Mark, Luke, John, and the Acts of the Apostles, let us glance at the declarations contained in the inspired Epistles. Let us begin with the Epistles to the Thessalonians, because it is known to every scholar that they were the first Saint Paul was directed by the Holy Ghost to write, and because they furnish such clear intimations of the doctrines he made prominent in his discourses, even where he preached but a short time. By consulting the

Acts of the Apostles we learn that after his release from the prison of Philippi on his first visit to Europe, he passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few," (Acts xvii: 24). Whereupon it appears that a tumult arose among the people, the result of which was the departure of the Apostle by night. Tarrying for a little season at Berea, he next visited Athens, and went to Corinth, where the Spirit of God commanded him to address a communication to the believers in Thessalonica.

In the first chapter of the first Epistle he describes them as those who had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i: 9, 10). The translation of Conybeare and Howson, in

the "Life and Epistles of Saint Paul," makes this language still stronger, for they render it, "Now you wait with eager longing for the return of his Son from the heavens, even Jesus, whom he raised from the dead, our deliverer from the coming vengeance." It seems plain, then, that these saints, who were once groping in the darkness of heathenism, had learned truth enough in the course of a few weeks to know that Jesus had delivered them from the wrath to come, and to understand that it was their proper attitude of soul to wait with eager longing for His return from the heavens. Neither they nor the Apostle were told when He will return, but they were taught to wait for Him, instead of looking for the universal triumph of the Church, and the boasted progress of Christian civilization. The first step in the experience of a saint is to know upon the sure testimony of God that Christ has actually delivered him from wrath, and the next step as the logical result of this accomplished redemption is to wait for Christ from heaven, so that Christ is the beginning, the middle, and the end, the centre and the circumference, the motive and the object, the all in all to the believing soul. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning:

I say, more than they that watch for the morning," (Ps. cxxx: 5, 6).

In the second chapter the Apostle writes, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thess. ii: 19). Conybeare and Howson render this, "When you shall stand before our Lord Jesus Christ at his appearing." Here also the inspired writer points his brethren to the second coming of Christ as the time of a glad reunion, as the time of mutual recognition and bliss, as the time of glorious reward and sweet rest after the toils of his earthly ministry, when, surrounded as it were by those who had received the gospel at his hands, he can say, in the language of his Master, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me," (Heb. ii: 13).

In the third chapter he writes, "The Lord make you to abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," (1 Thess. iii: 12, 13). If all the saints come with the Lord Jesus when He is finally revealed here on the earth, it follows that they must have been previously caught up to meet

Him and be with Him, and it is this happy day of the coming of Christ *for* the saints before He comes *with* them, which the Apostle ever seeks to keep before the minds of believers as a powerful incentive to diligence and fidelity, that then they may be found unblameable in holiness.

In the fourth chapter he writes, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," (1 Thess. iv: 14–18). The meaning of this precious passage is too obvious to need the slightest exposition, but the exact import of some of the terms may be better understood if we look at other renderings that have been given. Dean Alford's Revised New Testament translates it as follows: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which fell asleep

through Jesus will God bring together with him. For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord, that we which are living, who remain behind to the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise gain an advantage over them which fell asleep. Because the Lord himself shall come down from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are living, who remain behind, shall be caught up all together, with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord, into the air: and so shall we be always with the Lord. So then comfort one another with these words." Darby's Translation gives it as follows: "If we believe that Jesus has died and has risen again, so also God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord, are in no way to anticipate those who have fallen asleep; for the Lord himself, with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and with trump of God, shall descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord. So encourage one another with

these words." What comfort and encouragement they afford is known best to those who are sorrowing over the graves of their beloved dead; and to them, if taught in the word, it seems strange that any Christian can think of the promised coming of Christ except with irrepressible yearning.

In the fifth chapter the Apostle says, "Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when THEY shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon THEM, as travail upon a woman with child; and THEY shall not escape. But YE, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake YOU as a thief. YE are all the children of light, and the children of the day: WE are not of the night, nor of darkness," (1 Thess. v: 1–5). In the same chapter we read, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. v: 23).

It may be well to notice here that the Thessalonian Christians did not need the Apostle's instructions concerning the times and seasons, because they themselves knew perfectly that the

day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. It is not said, the *coming* of the Lord is like that of a thief in the night, but the *day* of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, and "the thief cometh not, but for to steal and to kill, and to destroy," (John x: 10). But it may be asked, how did these Christians, so recently brought out of the darkness of heathenism, know so perfectly the things of which the Apostle speaks? Obviously by the teachings of the Apostle himself during his brief stay of a few weeks among them. If this be so, what conclusive evidence does it afford of the prominence of the doctrine of our Lord's coming in his preaching, and of its importance in his estimation! There are thousands of ordained clergymen at the present day who really plume themselves on their profound ignorance of a truth perfectly familiar more than eighteen hundred years ago to men, women, and children just delivered from idolatry, and who give as an excuse for this ignorance that they are occupied with something far more important than that which the inspired Apostle thought it needful to teach at the very beginning of his ministry among the Thessalonians. Thus faithfully taught, that day could not overtake them as a thief in the night, but it must be conceded that its arrival now would be a most unexpected event

to a vast majority of those who claim to be Christians. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares," (Luke xxi: 34).

Proceeding now to the Second Epistle we read in the first chapter, "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day," (2 Thess. i: 7–10).

In the second chapter we read, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand [or rather, is come, as Alford renders it; has already arrived]. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come,

except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hindereth] will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," (2 Thess. ii: 1–8).

Here again it may be well to notice that the Apostle says, "remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you I told you these things?" Is not this another proof of the prominence of the doctrine in his preaching, since he took opportunity to tell these things to recently converted heathen during a stay among them of three or four weeks? Can these things be of less importance now, when the lapse of eighteen hundred years has certainly brought us that much nearer the great event to which the minds of the early Christians were habitually turned in eager waiting and watching? Surely it does not become

the disciples of Christ to speak slightingly of a truth to which the Holy Ghost has assigned the chief place in the first communications He was pleased to make, no less for our instruction, than for the benefit of those to whom they were immediately addressed.

In the third chapter we read, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," (2 Thess. iii: 5). Thus do we find the second coming of our Saviour distinctly mentioned in every chapter of both these Epistles, occupying about one verse out of five in the entire revelation the Spirit gave to the Thessalonians. Nor is it a doctrine peculiar to the Epistles at which we have just glanced, but it is a pervading characteristic of the Epistles in general as will abundantly shown in the next chapter. We find it wherever we turn until we reach the last book of the Bible which opens with the solemn announcement, "Behold, he cometh with the clouds," and closes with the joyful promise, "Surely I come quickly."

The word *baptism* occurs four times in the Epistles, the word *baptize* once, the word *baptized* twelve times; twice in Rom. vi: 3, five times in 1 Cor. i: 13–16, once in 1 Cor. x: 2, once in 1 Cor. xii: 13, twice in 1 Cor. xv: 29, and once in Gal. iii: 27. In thirteen of the

Epistles baptism is not once named, nor is there the slightest allusion to it, and yet how prominent a place it occupies in the thoughts and discourse of well nigh the entire Church. No intelligent Christian can despise or neglect this sacred ordinance, however rarely it is brought to our notice by the inspired writers; but surely no intelligent Christian will despise or neglect a truth mentioned a score of times where baptism is mentioned once. The Holy Ghost seldom refers to the one, but He constantly speaks of the other; and whatever may be our views of the coming of Christ in relation to the Millennium, it can not be right to exclude from our pulpits and social circles, and books and periodicals, a doctrine taught in every thirtieth verse of the New Testament.

Rev. John Ker, of Scotland, in one of his excellent sermons, published in 1869, by Robert Carter & Brother, of New York, under the singular title of "The Day-Dawn and the Rain," well says, "This great event is constantly represented in the New Testament as near, and the view is natural and true. Never does the meeting with a beloved friend come so close to us, as when we have just parted from him. Love makes the tears of farewells sparkle into welcomes; and if we could only retain the same impression of Christ's loss, his return would be

as nigh. *It is moreover, in the New Testament, the great event that towers above every other.* The heaven that gives back Christ, gives back all we have loved and lost; solves all doubts, and ends all sorrows. *His coming looks in upon the whole life of the Church*, as a lofty mountain peak looks in upon every little valley and sequestered home around its base, and belongs to them all alike. Every generation lies under the shadow of it, for whatever is transcendently great is constantly near, and in moments of high conviction it absorbs petty interests and annihilates intervals. It may surely be for us to consider, whether our removal of Christ's coming further from us in feeling does not arise from a less vivid impression of its reality and surpassing moment. Such views depend in no way upon peculiar opinions regarding his advent, for the longing expectancy of his appearance should be as common to all Christians as is their hope, and a thousand years are as a day to the grand event which opens everlasting life." If the mass of Christians, who are notoriously indifferent to the doctrine of our Lord's second advent, could be brought into practical sympathy with the thoughts here expressed, the aim of the most ardent Pre-millennialist in testifying of Christ's coming would be happily accomplished.

CHAPTER VII.

SCRIPTURAL USE OF THE DOCTRINE.

DR. A. J. GORDON, a Baptist minister, of Boston, in an admirable little work recently published, entitled "IN CHRIST," writes as follows, of the redemption of the body: "Not only is this the event towards which the universal longing of creation is directed, but the hope as involved in the return of the Lord Jesus to which all Christian doctrine points, and to which each Christian ordinance is divinely adjusted. The first light that is reflected in the face of the new-born disciple as he comes forth from the waters of burial with Christ, is a foregleam of this hope. 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, *we shall be in the likeness of his resurrection.*' The last sound that lingers on our ears as the formula of the communion is repeated, is a refrain of this blessed hope: 'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come.*' Upon every thirtieth verse of Gospel and Epistle, a ray of this hope falls either directly or obliquely;

while throughout, duties and promises and beatitudes are turned to it and polarized by it as the supreme reward of faith."

Dr. W. R. Gordon, of the (Dutch) Reformed Church, also writes as follows, of the coming of the Lord: "Now, we confidently ask, Who can show *any other motive* so urgently pressed by Christ and by the sacred writers for the culture of all Christian virtue? Are we not then fully justified in saying that our doctrine is eminently practical, and well adapted to the end of making the members of the Church what they ought to be? Must not that precise form of faith be the true one, out of which the Holy Ghost educes the greatest formative power of Christian character? Who that has any respect for the 'oracles of God' can rationally doubt it?"

That these statements, strong as they are, do not exaggerate the use made of the second advent of Christ by the Saviour Himself and the Apostles, will be apparent to all who will carefully read the New Testament upon this point.

1. It is used as a powerful motive to constant watchfulness. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh," (Matt. xxiv: 42–44). "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh," (Matt. xxv: 13). "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," (Mark xiii: 32–37). "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or

come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants," (Luke xii: 35–38). "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame," (Rev. xvi: 15).

2. It is used as a motive to sobriety. "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober," (1 Thess. v: 2–6). "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i: 13). "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer," (1 Pet. iv: 7). Upon this last passage Calvin remarks, "The end he speaks of is not merely that of each several individual, but the entire renovation of the world; as if he said, that Christ will shortly come, and put an end to all things. It is not strange, therefore, if we are overwhelmed by worldly cares, and held in slumber, or if the sight of present things dazzles our eyes; because we do all commonly promise ourselves an eternity in this world; never at least does the end come into mind. Whereas, did the trump of Christ sound in our ears, it would

keenly smite all our senses, nor suffer them to lie thus torpid. It might be objected, however, that a long series of ages has elapsed since Peter wrote this, and still the end is not yet seen. I answer, that to us the time seems long for this reason, that we measure its length by the spaces of the present life, but that, could we have respect to the perpetuity of the life to come, many generations would be for us as it were a moment. (2 Pet. iii: 8). Moreover, it must be held as a first principle, that, ever since the appearing of Christ, there is nothing left to the faithful, but with wakeful minds to be always intent on his second advent."

3. It is used as a motive to repentance. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when [or rather, *so that*, *in order that*, as Dr. Alexander shows in his notes on Acts] the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," (Acts iii: 19–21). "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee

as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee," (Rev. iii: 3).

4. It is used as a motive to fidelity. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord," (Matt. xxv: 19–21). "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath," (Luke xii: 42–44). "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come," (Luke xix: 12, 13).

5. It is used as a motive not to be ashamed of Christ. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and

sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels," (Mark viii: 38).

6. It is used as a motive against worldliness. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works," (Matt. xvi: 26, 27).

7. It is used as a motive to moderation or mildness. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand," (Phil. iv: 5).

8. It is used as a motive to patience. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," (Heb. x: 36, 37). "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v: 7, 8).

9. It is used as a motive to the mortification of fleshly lusts. "For ye are dead [or rather, ye died], and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify [or put to death, and here the aorist, or past tense is employed] THEREFORE your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry," (Col. iii: 3–5).

10. It is used as a motive to sincerity. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ," (Phil. i: 9, 10).

11. It is used as a motive to the practical sanctification of the entire being. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. v: 23).

12. It is used as a motive to ministerial faithfulness. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," (2 Tim. iv: 1, 2).

13. It is used as a motive to induce obedience to the Apostle's injunctions. "I give thee charge

in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Tim. vi: 13, 14).

14. It is used as a motive to pastoral diligence and purity. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," (1 Pet. v: 2–4).

15. It is used as a motive to purify ourselves. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him [that is, this hope in Christ of seeing Him, and of being like Him at His appearing] purifieth himself, even as he is pure," (1 John iii: 2, 3).

16. It is used as a motive to abide in Christ. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence,

and not be ashamed before him at his coming," (1 John ii : 28).

17. It is used as a motive to endure manifold temptations and the severest trial of faith. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i : 7).

18. It is used as a motive to bear persecution for the sake of our Lord. "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy," (1 Pet. iv : 13).

19. It is used as a motive to holy conversation and godliness. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming [or rather, hastening the coming] of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," (2 Pet. iii : 11–13).

20. It is used as a motive to brotherly love. "The Lord make you to increase and to abound in love one toward another, and toward all men,

even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," (1 Thess. ii: 12, 13).

21. It is used as a motive to keep in mind our heavenly citizenship. "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," (Phil. iii: 20, 21).

22. It is used as a motive to love the second coming of Christ. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," (2 Tim. iv: 7, 8).

23. It is used as a motive to look for Him. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," (Heb. ix: 27, 28).

24. It is used as a motive to confidence in the

perseverance of the Lord. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," (Phil. i: 6).

25. It is used as a motive to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come," (Rev. ii: 25). "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," (Rev. iii: 11).

26. It is used as a motive to be separated by the salvation which grace brings and by the lesson which grace teaches unto the blessed hope which grace holds out to our believing contemplation. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," (Tit. ii: 11–13).

27. It is used as a motive to consider practical faith in the second advent as a crowning grace, and the proof of possessing in full measure the gifts of the Spirit. "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all

knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. i: 4–8).

28. It is used as a motive to regard the second coming of Christ as the great event for which believers should constantly wait. "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i: 9, 10).

29. It is used as a motive to keep us ever on the alert, because of its suddenness. "For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of Man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they

planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed," (Luke xvii: 24–30).

30. It is used as a motive to guard against hasty judgment. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God," (1 Cor. iv: 5).

31. It is used to encourage the Apostles, in their self-denying affection for the Lord, with the hope of a rich reward. "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelves thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Matt. xix: 27, 28).

32. It is used to assure the Apostles that a time of rejoicing is coming after all their toils in the service of the Master. "As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of

the Lord Jesus," (2 Cor. i: 14). "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain," (Phil. ii: 16.) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thess. ii: 19).

33. It is used to comfort the Apostles in view of His personal departure from them. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," (John xiv: 3). "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," (Acts i: 11).

34. It is declared to be the time of reckoning with his servants. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them," (Matt. xxv: 19).

35. It is declared to be the time of judgment for the living nations. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," (Matt. xxv: 31, 32).

36. It is declared to be the time of the resurrection of the saints. "Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming," (1 Cor. xv: 23).

37. It is declared to be the time of the manifestation of the saints. "For we must all appear [be manifested] before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," (2 Cor. v: 10). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," (Col iii: 4)..

38. It is declared to be the time of the retribution of unbelievers. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Thess. ii: 7, 8).

39. It is presented as the source of consolation to those sorrowing over their precious dead who fell asleep in Jesus. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," (1 Thess. iv: 14).

40. It is proclaimed every time the Lord's Supper is celebrated. "For as often as ye eat

this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come," (2 Cor. xi : 26).

Such are some of the uses made of the doctrine of Christ's second coming in the New Testament, to say nothing of the numerous allusions to it in the Old Testament. It seems to be employed to arm every appeal, to point every argument, to enforce every exhortation. Can the same be said of any other doctrine whatever? Is it employed in the same manner now in the preaching of the modern pulpit? Of course it will be asserted that it is, but the assertion may be met by a flat denial; and the reader can judge for himself how often he has heard it mentioned in sermons or in prayers, since he first began to attend the ministry of the word, and the meetings of the saints. He may have heard frequent mention made of death, or the judgment, or heaven, or hell, but how seldom he has listened to a distinct statement, or even a faint reference concerning the coming of the Lord. This is not written to find fault, or to censure thousands of excellent brethren who only need to have their attention awakened to a neglected truth; but it is important to show that the manifold practical uses made of the second advent by the inspired writers ought to be made of it still, if we accept the sacred Scriptures as the infallible rule of faith and practice. A

rationalist may sneer at the ever recurring testimony of these Scriptures with regard to the second coming of our Lord, but all who bow to their authority as the very word of God must, after examination, place the doctrine here advocated very high in their esteem. Their experience will be something like that of the gifted and saintly Hewitson, of whom his biographer says, "The 'blessed hope' took its place thenceforth, not only in his understanding, but in his heart. He not only believed in the speedy 'appearing' —he loved it—waited for it—watched for it. 'Faith,' we find him saying, 'looks back to the cross, and is at peace; it looks forward to the crown, and pants for glory. O to have more of the life and power of such a faith!' So mighty a motive-power did it become, that he used to speak of it ever afterwards as bringing with it a kind of second conversion. It is interwoven with the texture of his whole future life."

CHAPTER VIII.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

DR. DAVID BROWN, previously mentioned as the great post-millennial authority, describes the blessed time for which the whole Church of Christ is longing and laboring under the following heads, the italics being his own: "1. It will be characterized by the *universal diffusion of revealed truth.* 2. It will be marked by the *universal reception of the true religion, and unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ.* 3. It shall be a time of *universal peace.* 4. It will be distinguished by *much spiritual power and glory.* 5. *The in-bringing of 'all Israel'* will signalize that day. 6. *The ascendency of truth and righteousness in human affairs* will distinguish that day. 7. It will be characterized by great *temporal prosperity.*"

Under these headings he arrays passages of Scripture which, for the most part, are appropriate and conclusive in establishing the positions he assumes. They are positions which post-mil-

lenarians will no doubt gladly take by the side of their distinguished leader, and since they will be accepted without a moment's hesitation, as far as they go, by pre-millenarians, happily the two parties are brought together again in harmony. The question is not whether there will be a period of millennial blessedness, but whether it will precede or succeed the personal coming of Christ.

Every other question is subordinate to this, for if our Lord is to come before the time of "the universal diffusion of revealed truth," the universal reception of the true religion and unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ," the time of "universal peace," of "much spiritual power and glory," of the "in-bringing of all Israel," of "the ascendency of truth and righteousness in human affairs," of "great temporal prosperity," as described by Dr. Brown, it is obviously the proper posture of the believer to be continually "looking for that blessed hope." But if He is to come after the time commonly called the Millennium, it is equally obvious that it is foolish to expect Him now; and all the motives and incentives to Christian life stated in the preceding chapter are instantly stripped of their power.

It is a fact which few will dispute, that those who reject the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millen-

nial advent do not feel the power of such motives and incentives; but on the other hand they exhibit symptoms of impatience or contempt or weariness, when believers who "love his appearing" tell out the joy excited in their breasts by its anticipation. Yet the restiveness occasioned by the bare mention of the subject should not cause surprise, when we remember that the truth here advocated clouds some of the fairest prospects, and scatters to the winds some of the most fondly cherished expectations of the Church and the world. It is altogether congenial to our nature to think well of ourselves, and, as our political and pulpit orators say, "to have faith in man," and to watch with admiration the strides of an advancing civilization, and to boast of the important discoveries and wonderful inventions of the age, and to point with triumph to the gorgeous car of human progress as it moves across the face of the earth, carrying light and liberty to the nations, and to be proud of our country, and to be confident that our own religious denomination is to wield an immense influence in converting mankind. Hence when it is asserted that all these appliances will utterly fail to regenerate the race, or to bring about the desired Millennium, it is not strange that the statement should be scouted by the multitude as the proof of a diseased

mind. Let those to whom God has been pleased to reveal the truth have patience with the ignorant and deluded, remembering the darkness in which they themselves once walked.

But after all the inquiry remains, what does the word of God teach with regard to the means by which millennial holiness and happiness are to be introduced? It is undoubtedly the common impression that they will be evolved out of the present state of things as manhood follows youth, or as the noon-tide splendor of the sun succeeds the morning that struggled with the early mists. It is supposed that the world will gradually become better and better, that the Church will gradually increase the number of her converts, and enlarge the range of her influence, that war and intemperance and vice in all its hideous forms will gradually disappear, until at length there will be "the universal diffusion of revealed truth," "the universal reception of the true religion, and unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ," and "a time of universal peace." Men find promises of such a blessed period in the Sacred Scriptures, and leap to the conclusion that they will be fulfilled through the agencies now employed for saving the lost without reading the promises in their connection.

Let us, however, pursue the track marked out

by Dr. Brown, and we will see whether he has not put upon the texts he cites a most erroneous construction in order to sustain his views of a Millennium without Christ. We can make the Bible teach anything, even that "there is no God," (Ps. xiv: 1), if we are allowed to take detached statements without regard to the context. The only way to read the holy book is to study it all, and especially to examine any passage that may engage our attention, in the light of its immediate surroundings. The failure to do this has led the author now under review, in quoting his favorite texts, to leave out the important fact that the millennial glory of which he writes is to be introduced by terrible judgments, and not by the gradual success of the gospel as now proclaimed. An examination of the principal passages he cites will make this perfectly clear.

(1.) Under the heading that the Millennium "will be characterized by the universal diffusion of revealed truth," he brings forward the following texts: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi: 9); and "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations," (Isa. xxv: 7). With regard to the former of these cheering promises, the prophet

after predicting in the preceding chapter the wrath of God against Israel, leaving them, although like the sand of the sea, a little remnant to return, and after stating that "the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled," introduces the passage quoted by Dr. Brown by declaring that "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," (Isa. xi: 4). Then immediately follows the prophecy that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, terminating with the promise that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. The universal diffusion of revealed truth, therefore, is not the result of the means of grace now employed, but it closely succeeds a well-nigh universal destruction.

With regard to the second passage quoted by Dr. Brown, we find it introduced with these words: "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are

on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall they be visited [margin, found wanting]. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," (Isa. xxiv: 19–23). This is the mount of which it is said, "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations." Obviously, however, this blessed time is not preceded by the gradual spread of the gospel, but by the most dreadful judgments, as we learn also from the verses following the promise which describe the enemies of God as trodden down for the dunghill, while He spreads forth His hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim.

(2.) Under the next head describing the Millennium as "marked by the universal reception of the true religion, and unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ," the first passage cited is

the well-known and oft-quoted text, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," (Ps. ii: 8). But what follows in the very next verse? Something seldom heard when the previous text is quoted, although there it stands in immediate connection. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." If any can see in breaking them with a rod of iron and in dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel, or indeed in the entire Psalm, that represents the desperate struggle of the kings of the earth and the rulers against Jehovah and against His Anointed, only the peaceable triumphs of the gospel and the conversion of sinners through faith in the name of Jesus, it is useless to waste upon them any further arguments.

The next text of any importance in its bearing upon the subject is from the prophet Isaiah when he says, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will

walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. ii: 3). Without dwelling now upon the fact that this is expressly said to be "the word that Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem," (Isa. ii: 1), and therefore it can not be the Christian Church, it is enough at present to notice that in immediate connection with the prophecy, it is written, "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up: and he shall be brought low. . . . And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." (Isa. ii: 10–19).

So with the next passage quoted: "It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (Isa. lxvi: 23). But how is this unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ to be brought about? We are told in the same connection.

"For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire," (Isa. lxvi: 15). "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhoring unto all flesh," (Isa. lxvi: 24). So with the text from Zechariah: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one," (Zech. xiv: 9). But what ushers in this unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ? "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" [him], (Zech. xiv: 2–5).

(3.) "It shall be a time of universal peace." Under this head the first passage quoted is the following: "And he shall judge among nations,

and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," (Isa. ii: 4). It is indeed remarkable that Dr. Brown should not have noticed that the very text he brings forward to prove a time of universal peace declares that the Lord shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; that it is ushered in by the announcement of the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners together, and, as already shown, that it is followed by a description of men hurrying into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

In Micah iv: 3, the same promise of universal peace is found in precisely the same language, but there too the prediction is in manifest allusion to God's dealings with the literal Jerusalem and Zion; there too it is introduced by declaring a time of judgment as preceding it, when Zion shall be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest; and there too we have a prediction of terrible vengeance on the heathen, for "they know not the thoughts of the

Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth," (Mic. iv: 12, 13).

The next proof adduced is the beautiful passage, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [or adder's] den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi: 6–9). It is of no consequence for the present purpose whether this language is to be understood literally or figuratively, but it is clear that the time of universal peace which it signifies is to be introduced by dreadful judgments, for immediately before it is said, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Surely this can not refer to the conversion of sinners, nor to the triumph of the gospel through the agencies now employed.

(4.) "It will be distinguished by much spiritual power and glory." This point is illustrated by a narrative which Dr. Jonathan Edwards gives of a revival in the little town of Northampton, in New England, and only two texts of Scripture are cited in its support. The first is as follows: "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children," (Isa. lxvi: 8). The connection clearly shows that the reference is to Jerusalem, and not to the Christian Church; but even if the latter can possibly be meant, the spiritual power and glory will be introduced by appalling judgments, "for, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many," (Isa. lxvi: 15, 16).

The second text quoted declares that "a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a

strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." (Isa. lx: 22). Here also the entire chapter is concerning Jerusalem and Zion in direct contrast with the Gentile nations, but even admitting that it refers to the Christian Church, the striking prophecy is preceded by the declaration, "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun," (Isa. lix: 18, 19). There are many other passages which would have suited Dr. Brown's purpose far better, but of course these will not be noticed, as the only design at present is to follow his track closely.

(5.) "The in-bringing of all Israel will signalize that day." Here he announces his willingness to rest his argument upon the following passage, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," (Rom. xi: 26–29). The use of this

Scripture is particularly unhappy for Dr. Brown, for it plainly states that instead of Israel being converted by the gospel they were enemies concerning the gospel; that not upon the principle of the New Testament which offers salvation to all alike without distinction of persons and without regard for lineage, but upon the Old Testament principle, they were beloved for the fathers' sakes; and that they will be saved as a nation only by the personal appearing of the Saviour, as it is written, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

So with the other quotation which he subsequently gives: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness," (Zech. xii: 10, 11; xiii: 1). Here, for a wonder, Dr. Brown admits that the reference

is to literal Jerusalem or Israel, but what is said concerning the method by which "the in-bringing" will be accomplished? "In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. . . . In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem," (Zech. xii: 3–9). Then, and not before, there shall be poured upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Him whom they pierced, because He will then appear in person for their deliverance, as it is said in the fourteenth chapter, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," and "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with him."

(6.) "The ascendency of truth and righteousness in human affairs will distinguish that day." Here our author brings forward a number of proof texts, but of all of them it can be asserted that they either obviously allude to Israel, or that, like the rest which have been examined, they are directly connected with the prediction of overwhelming judgments, and not with the gradual progress of the gospel, as the means of bringing in the ascendency of truth and righteousness in human affairs. Let us look, for example, at the first passage cited. "There was given to the Son of Man dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him. . . . Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. . . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, should be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," (Dan. vii: 14, 22, 27).

It is very remarkable that Dr. Brown selected these three verses out of the entire chapter to prove the ascendency of truth and righteousness in human affairs without the personal presence of Christ, when lying side by side with them are other verses proving just the opposite; and it is still more remarkable that a fair-minded inquirer

after truth took detached statements here and there without the slightest regard for the context, and in one instance actually cut a verse in two, leaving out the part that did not suit his purpose. The first verse he quotes is the fourteenth, but the thirteenth says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." Then follows the statement, "And there was given him [not the church, nor truth and righteousness, but there was given HIM] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him."

The second verse he quotes is the twenty-second, but the twenty-first says, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;"—then follows the twenty-second, "until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Dr. Brown entirely leaves out the clause, "until the Ancient of days came," and yet it positively asserts that the power symbolized by "the little horn," whatever that may be, made war with the saints, and prevailed against them UNTIL the Ancient of days came. If there is to be war with the saints, and prevailing against

them UNTIL the Ancient of days comes, (and He is spiritually present with His people always,) then it is certain that there can be no Millennium before His appearing.

The third verse quoted by Dr. Brown is the twenty-seventh, but the twenty-sixth says, "The judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion, [that of the little horn] to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Then follows the statement, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Thus does he carefully omit all reference to texts that militate against his views, and all mention of the fact that fearful judgments and the personal coming of Christ, instead of the peaceful and ever advancing progress of the Church, are to usher in the ascendency of truth and righteousness in human affairs. Such, it is painful to add, is a specimen of his dealing with the word of God all through his book.

(7.) "It will be characterized by great temporal prosperity." Here he very properly deems it unnecessary to quote passages, and therefore it is unnecessary to pursue him further, except to throw out the challenge to all students of the Sacred Scriptures to produce a single promise

of great temporal prosperity connected with the Millennium that does not lie embodied, as it were, in the midst of appalling predictions of coming vengeance. If such great temporal prosperity should ensue in the present dispensation and order of things, both the Bible and Christian experience sufficiently show that it would be a time of special temptation and danger to the souls of believers; and the New Testament, at least, would become an unmeaning book, for it is full of consolations and exhortations addressed to the poor, the sorrowful, the suffering, the hated, the persecuted.

The same challenge may be given with regard to any or all of Dr. Brown's characteristic and distinguishing features of the millennial period. In every instance it can be shown that the bright picture which he paints rests upon the dark background of woes for Christendom and the world at large; and that the very texts which he himself adduces to prove the gradual increase of gospel truth and holiness and happiness, when examined in the light of their connections, demonstrate that a *Millennium is impossible before judgment comes.* Well might Dr. James W. Alexander say in one of his letters, "Though not quite a millenarian, I was struck with these words of Chalmers to Bickersteth,

'But without slacking in the least our obligation to keep forward this great [missionary] cause, I look for its conclusive establishment through a widening passage of desolating judgments, with the utter demolition of our present civil and ecclesiastical structures.'" There are thousands of others who would be compelled to adopt the same views with Dr. Chalmers, in his increasing knowledge of God's word, if they would sit down to an earnest, independent, and prayerful study of this holy word, without the torpor of indifference, or the influence of prejudice.

CHAPTER IX.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

IN examining the Scriptures quoted by Dr. Brown to illustrate and prove the distinguishing features of the millennial period, it has been seen that they denote a state of prevalent wickedness at the close of the present dispensation calling for judgment. Other Scriptures not cited by him present this fact still more clearly, but they can not be given here for want of space; and those who are interested in the subject will now be able to carry on the investigation for themselves. They will find that according to the uniform testimony of the Old Testament prophets, the introduction of the happy period usually called the Millennium, for which Christians are laboring and waiting, is invariably associated with scenes of vengeance and destruction, and never is it intimated that it will result from the gradual increase of righteousness and truth and peace on the earth.

It remains to show briefly that the same condition of things at the termination of the present

age and just before the personal appearing of the Lord is distinctly brought out in the New Testament. "As it was it the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed," (Luke xvii: 26–30). The least that can be made of this solemn language is that utter worldliness and ungodliness will abound, and that the moral characteristics of the days of Noah and Lot will distinguish the period when the Son of Man is revealed. Hence in the following chapter it is added, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii: 8). There are some who remove the interrogation mark after these words so as to force from them the assertion that the Son of Man *shall* find faith, or rather *the* faith, on the earth at His second coming, but this does not change in the slightest degree the terrible significance of the statement. Even if it is an

affirmation instead of a question, the utmost that can be gathered from it is that faith will not have entirely disappeared from the earth when the Saviour returns.

There is much similar testimony found among the wonderful sayings of our Lord, which may be noticed hereafter; but for the present, the attention of the reader is called to the teachings of the inspired Epistles concerning the moral state of the Church and the world at the close of the dispensation, and therefore at the time of Christ's second advent. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. . . . If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained," (1 Tim. iv: 1–6). Here we are plainly told that there is to be an apostacy among those who profess to be the people of God, for some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing

spirits, and doctrines of devils; having their consciences seared with a hot iron; and moreover, we learn that a good minister of Jesus Christ will put his brethren in remembrance of these things.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," (2 Tim. iii: 1–5). According to this testimony, in the last days there shall not be peaceful, but perilous times; for men who, it is clear, claim to be Christians, will be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. If such is to be the condition of the Church, what must be the state of the world, and how strikingly are we reminded of our Lord's prediction, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept,' (Matt. xxv: 5). Even when aroused, it will be found that though to human view the ten virgins are alike, yet half the number possess only the form of godliness, while denying the power thereof;

bearing the lamps of an outward profession, but taking no oil with them.

"Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape," (1 Thess. v: 2, 3). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," (2 Thess. 1: 7–10). "Knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," (2 Tim. iii: 3, 4). It will not be denied that the coming of the Lord in these passages is literal and personal; and hence it is certain that instead of finding all the inhabitants of the earth eagerly awaiting His arrival amid the holy felicities of a millennial state, He will find multitudes at least in the last days, to whom His advent will be as the dread approach of a thief in the night,

and upon whom He will pour, in the midst of their scoffing, the devouring fury of His righteous indignation. It can not therefore be that at the time preceding the coming of the Lord "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi : 9) ; and "they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith the Lord," (Jer. xxxi : 34).

To what has already been said might be added the whole book of Revelation which, all expositors admit, covers the entire period between the first and second coming of Christ, and which is crowded with predictions of the most appalling judgments, and almost nothing but judgments up to the very time when the Apostle tells us, he "saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp

sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh," (Rev. xix: 11–21).

However figurative this language may be, it certainly teaches something, and it certainly does not teach the universal reception of the gospel, nor the conversion of the nations. The eyes looking like a flame of fire, the vesture dipped in blood, the smiting with a sword, the ruling with a rod of iron, the treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, the summons to all birds of prey to gorge themselves with the flesh of kings and captains and mighty men, the casting alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, are surely the accompaniments of a tremendous slaughter and the tokens of a terrible wrath, rather than the indications of the peaceful triumphs of the Church. But immediately after this awful scene we have an account of the binding of Satan for a thousand years, and therefore the Millennium, which owes its name to this very passage, is represented as directly succeeding overwhelming judgments and wide-spread destruction.

There is but one possible way of reconciling with these plain statements and facts the theory, now commonly held, that under the influence of Christianity, we may expect the world to grow gradually better and better, until every false religion shall disappear, and enlightenment, and civilization, and liberty, and good order, and

piety universally prevail. It is to suppose that after the millennial period of righteousness without the personal presence of Christ, there will be a great falling away; for it will not be denied by any intelligent reader of the Scriptures, that at the time immediately preceding the appearing of the Son of God from heaven, wickedness will abound on every hand. If this supposition is correct, however, surely we may expect to find an intimation of it somewhere in the inspired writings; but on the other hand, if the Holy Ghost so describes the course of events during the present dispensation that no conceivable place can be found for a thousand years of holiness and happiness on the earth between the first and second coming of Christ, then the view must be abandoned, or held in the very face of God's blessed word. Does that word teach that we are to look for a time when the truth as it is in Jesus shall gain the ascendency in human affairs before His personal advent, or does it distinctly announce the sufferings and cross-bearing and rejection by the world of those whom He calls His "little flock" up to the very hour when they shall be gathered together unto Him in the heavens? To the discussion of the question here presented, the attention of the reader is now invited, with the preliminary remark that it becomes us all to be

entirely subject to the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, and not to the opinions of men. If the Bible proclaims a Millennium before the literal advent of Christ, let it be shown; and if it asserts that there will be the very opposite of a Millennium until He appears, let us be on our guard against the perils that surround us.

CHAPTER X.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

IN entering upon the direct proofs that it is unscriptural, and, therefore, contrary to the will of God and hurtful to the Church, to expect the Millennium before the personal coming of our Lord, there are two modes of presenting the truth. The first is to quote a vast number of texts both from the Old and New Testaments, which conclusively show that, during the entire continuance of the present dispensation, sorrow and suffering, and conflict with foes within and without will be the portion of the saints; and that the dispensation will pass away in a series of terrific judgments, instead of being merged in the blessings of universal righteousness and peace. This, however, would leave no space for comments, without protracting the argument to an unprofitable length. The second mode is to offer fewer passages from the Scriptures with brief remarks, simply to call the attention of the reader to the precise form of statement contained in God's word. On the whole it seems preferable

to pursue the latter course, though it is difficult to determine what to select from such a mass of testimony.

(1). Confining our attention for the present to the Old Testament, we find recorded in the second chapter of Daniel a remarkable dream of the king of Babylon, which the prophet of God recalled to the mind of the monarch, and then interpreted as follows: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs [or sides, as the margin renders it] of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O

king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay [or, earthern-ware, as Trëgelles thinks it means], and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken [or, brittle]. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom

shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

There is no dispute concerning the meaning of the various parts of the image here described. Post-millenarians insist no less strenuously than pre-millenarians that they signify the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. Of course no allusion is made in this statement to those rationalistic, or rather grossly irrational writers who argue, in the very face of the explicit testimony of our Lord, that Daniel was not the author of the book which bears his name, or who assert, in the very face of both our Lord and the Apostles, that his prophecy reaches no further than the time of the Maccabees. Even Gibbon could say, whether with or without a sneer, God knoweth, "The four empires are clearly delineated; and the invincible armies of the Romans described with as much clearness in the prophecies of Daniel, as in the histories of Justin and Diodorus." Indeed it is apparent to the most

casual reader, that we have in this book a symbolical history in prophetic outline of what our Lord calls "The times of the Gentiles," (Luke xxi : 24).

At the beginning of the Babylonian captivity, Israel, having proved to be utterly unworthy of the exalted trust committed to it as a faithful witness for God on the earth, was rejected; and the government that might have been wielded by a holy and happy Theocracy passed into the hands of the Gentiles. Lo-Ammi, not my people, was written on the banner of the Hebrews, and from that time it must trail in the dust, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." It pleased the Holy Ghost to reveal the character and course of this Gentile dominion, down to the very close of the present dispensation, and this is what we have in Nebuchadnezzar's vision. It is a fact so remarkable it can not be explained except on the ground of divine inspiration, that a captive Jew, living six hundred years before Christ, boldly and repeatedly asserted that there were to be only four universal monarchies until He come, whose right it is to rule. Nor need we resort to human authority to confirm the truth of the prediction, for in the word of God the four monarchies are distinctly designated, and that word is sufficient, without adding the testimony of profane history.

"Thou," said Daniel, addressing the king of Babylon, "art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Babylon, then, is the first great Gentile kingdom acting in relation to Israel, according to the divine declaration in Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel—I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come," (Jer. xxvii: 5–7).

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." In the inspired account of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar it is said, "them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia." To this it is added, "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the

kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me," (2 Chron. xxxvi: 20, 23). Again, in the prophecy of Daniel, we find that the mysterious and awful hand which appeared upon the wall of Belshazzar's palace, in the midst of his impious feast, wrote the doom of Babylon in the words, "PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians," (Dan. v: 28). Again, when the course of Gentile dominion was presented under a different symbol, it was said to the prophet, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia," (Dan. viii: 20). There can be no doubt, therefore, that the second great monarchy is the Medo-Persian, answering to the breast and arms of silver in the vision of the image.

"And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power," (Dan. viii: 21, 22). "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his

kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven," (Dan. xi: 2–4). Here, then, it is plain, we have "another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

The fourth kingdom, although accurately described, is not directly named in the Old Testament, but is constantly brought to view in the New Testament, as more directly concerned with the events of the last days. For example we read that at the birth of Jesus, "there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," (Luke ii: 1); and that the ministry of His great forerunner began "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea," (Luke iii: 1). We find that our Lord commanded to pay tribute to Cæsar; and wherever the Apostles journeyed, carrying the glad tidings of an instant salvation through faith in a crucified and risen Christ, they came into contact with the emblems of Roman authority and power. We have no difficulty, therefore, in determining what is meant by the fourth kingdom, strong as iron, without resorting to uninspired history. The Sacred Scriptures themselves inform us that the four kingdoms were the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman; and besides these

there will be no other world-wide monarchies until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Men of boundless ambition, and wonderful military genius, and powerful resources, like Charlemagne and Napoleon, have endeavored to establish kingdoms equal to these in extent and duration, but their efforts have been baffled, and the sceptre of universal empire has ever been wrested from their grasp. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever." (1 Pet. i: 24, 25).

Each of these kingdoms is represented as following the one that goes before, not by annihilating, but by incorporating it; thus transmitting a regular succession of rule, and amid all the changes that occur, having direct relation to Jerusalem. Whether the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, or Roman power exists, God takes care that the sacred city shall be in subjection, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The kingdoms are also represented as deteriorating in splendor, or in the arbitrary character of the authority exercised, while increasing in strength; and the last form in which the last or Roman empire appears is symbolized by iron mixed with clay. That it appears as divided is

seen by the two feet and ten toes, and is rendered certain by the vision of the Roman beast in the seventh chapter, where the ten horns are declared to be ten kings or kingdoms.

It is important to observe that "*in the days of these kings*, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." It is generally supposed that the stone cut out without hands refers to the first advent of Christ, and to the setting up of His kingdom in the hearts of His people, as it is called, and to the gradual, victorious spread of the gospel until all the kingdoms of the earth shall be brought within the pale of the Christian Church. The slightest examination, however, will be enough to convince the unprejudiced reader that this view is wholly untenable.

In the first place, it is plainly declared that the last, or Roman empire, shall be divided, when the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; but every child knows that the Roman empire was *not* divided when Jesus was born and the gospel began its blessed career. On the other hand it was then at the zenith of its glory and grandeur, nor was it

divided till centuries afterwards, nor has it ever been divided into ten kingdoms, as symbolized by the ten toes of the second chapter, and the ten horns of the beast in the seventh chapter. It is difficult to find any two, among writers who imagine that it has been divided, agreeing in their classification of the ten kingdoms; and this, for the very obvious reason, that no such division has taken place, and for the additional reason that they confine their attention wholly to the map of Europe. Rome had an eastern as well as a western domain, and after awhile, an eastern as well as a western capital; and these writers ought to perceive that the two legs and two feet of the image clearly symbolize both portions of the immense empire. But whatever may be the speculations of men, the prophet distinctly informs us that "in the days of these kings," or in other words, when the whole of what was once the mighty Roman dominion is divided into ten kingdoms, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom; and with one blow shall the entire Gentile, or world power, commencing with Nebuchadnezzar, be broken to pieces, like a shattered image. It can not be, therefore, that the prediction concerning the stone was fulfilled at the birth of the Saviour, and hence the lesson of the image, instead of teaching the gradual growth of the

Church culminating in a spiritual Millennium, teaches directly the reverse.

In the second place, if it was the design of the Holy Spirit to show that a sudden and swift destruction shall overtake the Gentile powers, terminating as we may hereafter see, in the supremacy of the Antichrist, it must be admitted that more suitable language could not have been employed, than when it is said, a stone shall smite the image, and break it to pieces, and make it like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, so that the wind will carry it away, and no place can be found for it. But if it was the purpose of the Spirit to illustrate a gradual spread of the gospel and the gentle conversion of the nations through faith in Jesus, it would be difficult to conceive of language more utterly inappropriate, or more directly calculated to mislead the humble reader. Think of it for a moment. A stone, cut out without hands, or as it is in the margin, which was not in hands, smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces; and then were the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great

mountain, and filled the whole earth. In no proper sense can it be said that the meek and lowly Saviour attacked and destroyed the Roman empire, but it is certainly true that the Roman empire, through its representative, attacked and crucified Him. In no proper sense can it be said that His disciples were directed to attack it, but, on the contrary, they were commanded to be subject to it, even though a Nero held the reins of government. But the words of the prophet clearly imply that a stone fell in an instant with terrific force upon the image, grinding it to powder, and surely such language can not denote the mild and peaceable progress of the truth for centuries throughout the earth.

This mysterious stone is frequently brought to view in the word of God. Thus we find it as far back as the days of Jacob, when the dying patriarch is led to see in Joseph a type of the coming Messiah, and adds the significant words, "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," (Gen. xlix: 24). The sweet Psalmist of Israel celebrates this wondrous stone in the well-known language, quoted six times in the New Testament, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes," (Ps. cxviii: 22, 23). Isaiah continues the prophecy by

saying, "He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel," (Isa. viii: 14); and, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place," (Isa. xxviii: 16, 17).

In the application of the same figure to Himself, our Lord, after reminding the Jews of the Scripture concerning the rejection of the stone by the builders, declares, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder," (Matt. xxi: 44). The Apostle Peter connects the same Scripture with the risen Christ, saying, "This is the stone which was set at naught by you builders, which is become the head of the corner," (Acts iv: 11). Again he writes in his first epistle, "Unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed," (1 Pet. ii: 7, 8). In very different terms does he write to believers in Jesus,

when he says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. ii : 4, 5).

Here then we have the relation which this Stone sustains to the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God, as the three great divisions of the human family recognized in the Sacred Scriptures, as it is written, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God," (1 Cor. x : 32). To the Church, the stone is inexpressibly precious as the sure foundation of a heavenly hope; to the Jew it is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; and upon the Gentile dominion, which will prove to be more utterly apostate than ancient Israel, it will fall with destructive energy, grinding it to powder, and making it as the chaff of the summer threshing floors which the wind carrieth away.

The moral character of that dominion as independent, and even defiant, of God in its character, course, and consummation, is not only plainly declared in many portions of the inspired word, but it is strikingly illustrated in the four chapters of Daniel which follow the one now

engaging our attention. If any are disposed to ask why we find at the end of the second chapter such a remarkable break in the prophecy, which is not resumed until the seventh chapter; and why the interval is filled with the personal actings of heathen kings, that seem at first sight devoid of interest and instruction to us; and why this part of the book, embracing the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the vision of the beast with ten horns, is written in the Chaldee instead of the Hebrew language; the only reply is, that God is setting forth in those actings the characteristic features of the Gentile power, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

In the third chapter, we have its idolatry delineated in the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain of Dura, and which as a masterly stroke of State policy he required all his subjects to worship. In the fourth chapter we have the result of its brutal forgetfulness of God represented in the degradation of Babylon's proud monarch, who was reduced to the level of the beasts. In the fifth chapter we have its gross impiety rehearsed in the wild revelry of Belshazzar, when he "brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines,

drank in them." In the sixth chapter we have its daring self-exaltation typified in the blasphemous decree of Darius forbidding prayer to be offered to any being except to himself. Thus do these four chapters announce to those who have ears to hear, that there is to be a wider and still wider departure from God during the period of Gentile dominion, until "that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." This man of sin, who crowns the increasing iniquity of weary centuries with the arrogant assumption of divine prerogatives, is not to be converted, but consumed with the breath of the Lord, and destroyed by the brightness of His personal appearing. This image, standing as the representative of the four great world powers during the entire period of Israel's rejection, is not to be changed or moulded into the likeness of Christ, but the stone shall fall upon it, grinding it to powder, according to the Saviour's prediction, or making it as the chaff of the summer threshing floors, according to the word of the prophet. As it has been shown that this did not occur at the birth of Jesus, and as it will not occur, therefore, before His second advent, when the Gentile

dominion, lifting its haughty head against His rightful authority, shall be broken to pieces; the conclusion is unavoidable that no Millennium can gladden the sight of suffering humanity until He shall come again.

(2). The same conclusion is much more briefly reached by an examination of the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the four mighty Gentile powers are symbolized by four great beasts coming up from the sea, diverse one from another. The fourth beast, says the prophet, was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, [or rather, set up, according to Tregelles and the best authorities,] and the Ancient of days did sit. . . . I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him

dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," (Dan. vii: 7–14).

Such was the vision which grieved and troubled Daniel, and he eagerly sought its interpretation. The reply was, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, [or kingdoms, as the twenty-third verse states], which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High [most high places, according to Tregelles] shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the

kingdom. Thus he said; The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they [that is, the times and laws] shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii: 17–27).

The word "horn," it is well known, is the usual Scriptural symbol of power, and it is the generally received opinion among Protestants that the "little horn," described in the vision, is the symbol of Popes or of the Roman Catholic Church. It may be shown hereafter that this

opinion can not be correct, but admitting for the present that it is true, it is obvious that the Popes or the Roman Catholic Church will continue to flourish and triumph even until the coming of Christ; for it is said, "The same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them UNTIL the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." We know precisely when that time is, for we read in a preceding verse, "one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days," and "there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom." The coming of the Son of Man clearly refers to His second advent, and we have almost the same language in the solemn testimony of the Lord Himself, when He said at His trial before the high priest, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," (Matt. xxvi: 64). If, therefore, Popery, or whatever power is symbolized by the "little horn," shall make war with the saints, and prevail against them, and speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints of the Most High *until* the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, it is perfectly certain that the Millennium

can not intervene before that illustrious event. Hence it follows that the expectation of the victorious progress of the truth, and the constant enlargement of the Christian Church, until all nations shall be converted, is not only an idle dream, but a dangerous delusion blinding the minds of believers to the perils that are closing in about them.

(3). In the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah it is written, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the Lord my

God shall come, and all the saints with thee. . . . And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one," (Zech. xiv: 2–9).

That this entire scene refers to the second coming of Christ is too apparent to admit of a reasonable doubt. Dr. Henderson, in his Commentary on the Minor Prophets, acknowledges that it is literal, and then, with a recklessness of assertion absolutely amazing, insists that the prophecy which describes the capture of Jerusalem was fulfilled when the city was taken by Titus, although it is expressly stated that only half of the city shall go forth into captivity; that *then*, or at that time, the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations; that His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives; that the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst; and that the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with HIM, as Dr. Henderson shows upon the authority of nearly forty manuscripts and all the versions, we ought to read, instead of *with thee*, as in our English Bibles. "That this period," he writes, "is that of the Millennium,

or the thousand years, the circumstances of which are described Rev. xx: 3–7, I can not entertain a doubt." Again he writes, "for the application of this part of the prophecy, compare the parallel prediction of our Lord himself, Matt. xxiv: 30, 31, where those whom Zechariah designates *holy ones*, are called his angels." And yet he is rash enough to add, "that a future personal and pre-millennial advent of the Redeemer is here taught, I can not find."

Dr. T. V. Moore, although a post-millennialist, writes with far better judgment in his Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, "the chapter seems to refer to facts distinct from those predicted in the last chapter, probably the last great events of the present dispensation, that are described in other prophecies in terms of such fearful grandeur. It seems to point to that last great struggle of the powers of evil with the Church, which is to be ended by the coming of Christ in great power, and the complete establishment of his kingdom of glory." He is entirely mistaken in supposing that the Church has anything to do with the future seige and sack of Jerusalem, but he is correct in referring the scene to the last great events of the present dispensation. The force of his testimony is much weakened, however, by the remarkable

statement, "it is impossible for us to take this whole passage literally, for God can not literally place his feet on the Mount of Olives; but how far it must be taken as figurative, we can not tell."

Why, it may be asked, can not God literally place His feet on the Mount of Olives? It is certain that the Blessed One whom Thomas addressed as "My Lord and my God," and whom every Christian in the world delights to honor as "the true God and eternal life," did literally place His feet on the Mount of Olives, when He was down here in human flesh; and it is equally certain that He not only can, but that He will literally place them there again; for it was on the Mount of Olives the two men in white apparel said to the wondering disciples, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey," (Acts i: 11, 12).

As Dr. Moore well says, "it is evident that no events have yet occurred in history to which these predictions are applicable without much forcing, and it seems most natural to interpret the first verses of the chapter as we

interpret the rest." But if this is so, it is equally evident that there can be no Millennium previous to the second advent of Christ which is here clearly asserted, for not only is there no intimation of a long period of millennial blessedness in the preceding part of the prophecy, but directly the reverse is taught. The inspired writer announces a series of judgments which shall continue down to the time when there will be a partial restoration of the Jews to their own country, "and it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God," (Zech. xiii: 8, 9).

Then, in connection with these judgments and with the repentance of the remnant, immediately occurs the prediction of the gathering of all nations against Jerusalem, and the coming of the Lord with all His saints, and the description of the blessedness that shall follow, of which even Henderson is forced to say, "that this period is that of the Millennium, or the thousand years, the circumstances of which are described Rev.

xx: 3–7, I can not entertain a doubt." There are scores upon scores of prophecies in the Old Testament which fully sustain the conclusion reached by an examination of the three passages that have now been considered. Whether these prophecies are explained as referring to the people of Israel or to the Church of the present dispensation, the reader is challenged to find one verse that proclaims the future reign of righteousness, until the whole scene is swept of its accumulated iniquities by appalling judgments that usher in the coming of the Lord with His risen and changed saints.

CHAPTER XI

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

TURNING now to the New Testament, the first thing that strikes the attention of the thoughtful reader is the total absence of allusion to the universal triumph of the Church. If any are disposed to call this statement in question, let them search the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the inspired Epistles, and the book of Revelation, to discover, if they can, a single promise that predicts the expansion of the Christian faith, until all the nations shall be converted, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the seas.

It is true they will read the great commission given to the disciples by the risen Jesus when He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" but it is immediately added, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," (Mark xvi: 15, 16). There is no intimation in this language that all, or that even

the most of mankind will believe, nor is there in the direction as given in Matthew, to "teach all nations," for it is not said that all nations will receive the teaching. We find a renewal of the great commission given to the disciples by the ascending Jesus when He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth, (Acts i: 8). But neither in this passage is there anything more implied than the fact that they were to be His *witnesses*, in accordance with our Lord's statement elsewhere, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come," (Matt. xxiv: 14).

On the other hand, when the Apostles assembled to settle the dissension which arose in the early Church concerning circumcision, they announced that the purpose of God in visiting the Gentiles extended no further than "to take out of them a people for his name," (Acts xv: 14). They did not say it was His purpose to convert all the Gentiles, or the greater number of them, but *to take out* of them a people for His name. Abundant opportunities occurred, in the discourses of our Lord and in the writings of His inspired servants, to comfort Christians with the assurance of the certain success and the ultimate

victory of their cause through the agency of the Church. Instead of this, Christians are constantly addressed as a little flock, and are warned of opposition, persecution, temptation, and trial in every form; nor is there a verse that cheers them with the prospect of being free from these manifold troubles, before the end of the present age and the personal coming of the Saviour. If there is such a verse, let it be pointed out; or if the reader is not thoroughly familiar with the New Testament Scriptures, let him go to his Pastor, who has perhaps made the second advent the subject for his witticisms and the object of his scorn, and let *him* point out a text that tells of the reign of righteousness, and of peace and rest for the believer here, apart from the appearing of the divine Deliverer.

Resuming, however, the positive form of argument, we have seen, in the passages quoted from Daniel, the prediction of one called the little horn, of whom it is said that he had a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows, and that "the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, UNTIL the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." This power is described in the eleventh

chapter of the prophecy as follows: "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished," (Dan. xi: 36). There is a passage in the New Testament, not in the symbolical book of Revelation where the wilful king is often mentioned, but in a plain, didactic Epistle, which most naturally demands consideration in connection with this subject, and which furnishes the next proof that there can be no Millennium till Christ comes.

(4). "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ [or rather, of the Lord] is at hand [or rather, is present]. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first [or apostasy], and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you

these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [or hindereth] will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit [or, breath] of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," (2 Thess. ii: 1–8).

If the phrase, "the brightness of his coming," in this important passage refers to the personal return of Christ to the earth, it is perfectly obvious that there can be no Millennium before his second advent; because the inspired Apostle declares that the mystery of iniquity was already at work in his day, and that, instead of ceasing for a thousand happy years, it shall not only continue, but increase more and more, until the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who is not to be converted, but destroyed, at the appearing of the Saviour. If the phrase means what it says, in place of the triumphant progress of the gospel which so many are confidently anticipating, we should expect the triumphant progress of that which is not the gospel, culminating at length in the Antichrist, who will be found exulting in the full exercise of his blasphemous power, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven for his

sudden and terrible overthrow. If the phrase means what it says, the common theory, which leads most Christians to boast of the speedy success of the Church in converting the nations of the earth, is not only untrue, but it is precisely the reverse of the truth. The mystery of iniquity, at work in the Apostle's day, shall sweep onward in an ever widening path of sin until he who now hindereth, (and no doubt this is the Holy Ghost,) shall be taken out of the way, and—what then? A thousand years of peace and prosperity? Nay, then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit, or breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. The only possible way to avoid the conclusion that wickedness and not holiness is to prevail up to the very time of Christ's second advent is to deny that "the brightness of His coming" is to be understood literally.

But, in the first place, the Greek word which is translated "brightness" is used only six times in the New Testament, and in every passage, besides that now under consideration, it is rendered "appearing," and refers, as all are agreed, to Christ's personal coming. Thus we read of the "grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest

by the *appearing* of our Saviour Jesus Christ," (2 Tim. i: 10). Again we read, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his *appearing* and kingdom," (2 Tim. iv: 7). Again, "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Tim. vi: 14). Again, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his *appearing*," (2 Tim. iv: 8). Again, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious *appearing* of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," (Tit. ii: 13). These are all the passages in which the word is employed by the Holy Spirit, and the most determined opponent of the pre-millennial advent will admit that in every instance it refers to the literal and personal appearing or epiphany of Christ. Would it not then be very remarkable, and is it not highly improbable, that a word, which has a uniform and unvarying sense in the Scriptures, should be used in the passage before us in an entirely different sense, and forced to imply something that bears no kind of resemblance to its ascertained meaning? Surely we would treat no uninspired author in this way.

In the second place, the argument is greatly strengthened by considering the force of the Greek word which is here translated "coming." As previously stated, it occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament, in the following passages: "What shall be the sign of thy *coming*," "so shall also the *coming* of the Son of Man be," "so shall also the *coming* of the Son of Man be," "so shall also the *coming* of the Son of Man be," (Matt. xxiv: 3, 27, 37, 39); "they that are Christ's at his *coming*," (1 Cor. xv: 23); "I am glad of the *coming* of Stephanas and Fortunatus, and Achaicus," (1 Cor. xvi: 17); "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the *coming* of Titus; and not by his *coming* only," (2 Cor. vii: 6, 7); "but his bodily *presence* is weak," (2 Cor. x: 10); "that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my *coming* to you again," (Phil. i: 26); "as ye have always obeyed, not as in my *presence* only," (Phil. ii: 12); "are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his *coming*," (1 Thess. ii: 19; "stablish your hearts —at the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. iii: 13); "we which are alive and remain unto the *coming* of the Lord," (1 Thess. iv: 15); "be preserved blameless unto the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. v: 23);

"we beseech you, by the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, "by the brightness of his *coming*," "whose *coming* is after the working of Satan," (2 Thess. ii: 1, 8, 9); "be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the *coming* of the Lord," for the *coming* of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v: 7, 8); "the power and *coming* of our Lord," (1 Pet. i: 16); "where is the promise of his *coming*," "hasting unto the *coming* of the day of God," (2 Pet. iii: 4, 12); "and now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his *coming*," (1 John ii: 28).

The reader now has before him all the verses in the New Testament where the word translated "coming" in the passage before us is found. It will be seen that whenever it is employed with reference to human beings, it invariably denotes their literal and personal presence, and that whenever it is employed with reference to our Lord, in the passages quoted above, even post-millennialists concede that it denotes His literal and personal presence. The inference, then, is natural and, it may be added, unavoidable, that it refers to a literal and personal presence, in the phrase, "the brightness of his coming." Dr. Brown labors hard to break the tremendous force

of the testimony which we have here to the pre-millennial advent of Christ, by trying to show that the word *coming* is *sometimes* to be understood figuratively; but it is a remarkable fact that all the passages he quotes are from the Old Testament, and even in these it might be proved, if space permitted, that the coming is literal and personal. The question, however, is not, whether the word *coming* is ever used figuratively, but whether it is so used in the passage under consideration. Of this the reader can judge for himself. It only remains to add that if it was the design of the Holy Spirit to teach the literal and personal coming of Christ to destroy the lawless one, He employed the strongest words that can be found in the Greek to set forth that fact; but if it was His design to teach that Christ will not then really come, it is unaccountable that He employs terms which everywhere else in the New Testament denote a personal appearing and presence.

In the third place, the coming of the Lord forms a prominent theme of both Epistles to the Thessalonians, as the reader has already seen in an earlier portion of this little work. It is mentioned in every chapter, occupying about one verse in five of all the Apostle wrote at the dictation of the Holy Ghost, and in every instance,

unless it be in the passage before us, it is not denied that the coming is literal and personal. None will doubt that it is so, when the inspired writer describes the Thessalonian believers as having "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come;" when he writes, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" when he desires that their hearts may be stablished "unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints;" when he assures those who are sorrowing over their dead, asleep in Jesus, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air;" when he prays that their "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" when he declares that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance

on them that know not God;" when he beseeches them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him" not to be shaken in mind; when he longs to have their hearts directed "into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

Suppose that in two printed letters received from a friend, containing together one hundred and thirty-six sentences, you should find a certain subject mentioned in twenty-four sentences scattered here and there, and expressed in terms that have a well defined and admitted meaning. Suppose that in another sentence the same subject is mentioned in precisely the same terms, and without the slightest intimation from the writer that he wishes it to be understood in a sense different from that given to it in the twenty-four sentences. Would you think of giving it a different sense? Surely not. Yet this is the way men are compelled to treat the passage under consideration, in order to get rid of the humbling doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial advent, as the only hope of the struggling Church and the suffering creation. In the first verse of the second chapter, and wherever mentioned throughout the two Epistles, they all admit that the "coming" is literal and personal, but in the eighth verse of the same chapter, they say that "the brightness

of his coming" is not literal and personal, and does not at all refer to to His real coming. Alas, with such a principle of interpretation as this applied to God's precious word, it is not strange that millions rejoice in their belief of an infallible expounder of the Scriptures, nor is it strange that the Church should be found walking hand in hand with the world that is red with the blood of her murdered Lord! But if we are bound to conclude that the "coming" of the eighth verse is the same as the "coming" of the first verse, then it is certain that no Millennium can occur before Christ's second advent, because the mystery of iniquity at work when the Epistles were written will increase, until it heads up at last in the lawless one who shall be destroyed by the appearing of our Lord's coming.

In the fourth place, this view of the passage is the only one that is consistent with other Scriptures which plainly declare "that in the last days perilous times shall come," (2 Tim. iii: 1); that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution: but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," (2 Tim. iii: 12, 13); that "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii: 3, 4); that "there should

be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts," (Jude 18); that "as it was in the days of Noe — as it was in the days of Lot — even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed," (Luke xvii: 26–30); and "when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii: 8). These are a few of the statements in the New Testament, which are in strict harmony with all that is revealed in the Old Testament concerning the last days, and it is needless to say that any interpretation of Scripture which contradicts them must be false.

In the fifth place, the gloss put upon the phrase, "the brightness of his coming," by post-millennial writers has led them into the most erroneous view of the Apostle's meaning, when he beseeches his brethren not to be "shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." They seem to think that these Thessalonian Christians were greatly agitated by a rumor concerning the speedy coming of Christ, and that it was the aim of their inspired teacher to quiet their alarm by the assurance that He was not coming; and hence that we, although living more than eighteen hundred years later, should be on our guard against the folly of

supposing that the day of the Lord is at hand. But that they are entirely mistaken in all this will be apparent to the intelligent reader even upon a moment's reflection. Why these very believers who, it is supposed, were thrown into consternation by the rumored approach of the Lord, are previously described as waiting, or as Conybeare and Howson render it, waiting with eager longing, for Jesus to come from heaven; they are declared to be the Apostle's joy and crown of rejoicing at the coming of Christ; they are comforted concerning their dead in view of His coming; and they are besought by that coming, and by our gathering together unto Him, not to be troubled as that the day of Christ is at hand. This is sufficient of itself to show that the words admit of no such explanation as is usually given them.

But let us see what is really asserted. The late Dr. John Lillie, of the Presbyterian Church, one of the most accomplished scholars it has pleased the Lord to raise up in these last times for the defense of the truth, says in his admirable exposition of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, "The phrase *is at hand* occurs twenty times elsewhere in the New Testament; and in not one of those instances does it stand for the Greek word so rendered here. This of itself is certainly

somewhat suspicious. And what is still more remarkable is, that that same word, though it is found seven times in the New Testament, is nowhere else rendered as it is here, but in five places by *present*, and once by what is equivalent to that. Such also is the force of the word, wherever it is met with outside of the New Testament. Obviously, therefore, it was not any grammatical compulsion, but solely the supposed necessities of this particular case, that led our translators here to adopt for once an unusual interpretation. But take now what is acknowledged to be the meaning of the expression in every other place, and apply it to the passage before us, and this is the result: *that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor alarmed . . . as that the day of the Lord is*—not *at hand*, but *—on hand, has set in, has come, is present.*"

Dean Alford translates it, THE DAY OF THE LORD IS PRESENT, and adds, "not, is at hand; the word so rendered occurs six times beside in the New Testament, and always in the sense of *being present:* in two of these places, Rom. viii: 38, 1 Cor. iii: 22, the things present are distinguished expressly from things to come. Besides which, St. Paul could not have so written, nor could the Spirit have so spoken by him. The teaching of the Apostles was, and of the Holy

Spirit in all ages has been, that the day of the Lord *is at hand.* But these Thessalonians imagined it to be already come."

When we keep in mind that the verb translated *is at hand* is in the perfect tense, and really means *has come*, it will be seen that the remarks and deductions commonly suggested by the text are grossly erroneous. The Thessalonians were not troubled by the thought that the coming of the Saviour, for whom they waited with eager longing, was near. They were not occupying the dark ground of legalism on which so many Christians now walk in doubt and anxiety, all their life time subject to bondage through fear of death. They were not striving to make their peace with God, for they knew that God Himself had made peace through the blood of the cross, and that Christ was their peace, instead of something going on amid the intricacies of their own deceitful hearts. They were not struggling to be prepared for Christ's coming, for they knew that He had already delivered them from wrath, and that already being in Him by simple faith in His name, they were in the risen Jesus, and therefore forever passed out of death into life.

A rumor, however, had gained currency among them, that a revelation had been made by the Spirit, or that word had been communicated to

some of the prophets, or that a letter had been received from the Apostle, announcing that the day of Christ had come; and if this was so, they knew that they had not been caught up with the risen saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, as predicted in the first Epistle, and hence that they were excluded from the blessedness of His kingdom. This was the cause of their distress, and it was in part to correct their serious mistake, that the Holy Ghost directed Paul to write the second Epistle. He tells them that the day of Christ had not come, and that it would not come, until there shall have come the apostasy first, and the Man of Sin shall have been revealed, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Dr. Brown, in a foot-note on these words, says, "Compare Isa. xi: 4: 'He (Messiah) shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked person.' These are the words which the Apostle employs in the passage before us—whom the Lord shall destroy with the spirit of his mouth, and abolish with the brightness of his coming." But as it has been conclusively proved that "the brightness of his coming" refers to the personal advent of our Lord, it is just as conclusively proved that

no Millennium is possible before He comes. The Apostle does not say that the coming of Christ will not take place before the apostasy, but *the day of the Lord* will not come, and there is an immense difference between these two thoughts, as will be seen hereafter. For the former they were still to look and wait with ardent desire; but they had nothing to do with the latter, because *that* is the aspect of the second advent which implies terrific judgments upon the ungodly. The coming of Christ for His people may occur at any moment; but the day of the Lord will not be on hand, until the cup of wickedness in man's day shall be full, and the mystery of iniquity shall ripen into the blasphemy of the son of perdition, who shall be instantly destroyed by the appearance of the presence of the King of kings with all His saints.

CHAPTER XII.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

THE discussion which occupies the preceding chapter, although far from exhaustive, has been so extended, but little space can be given to other Scriptures that demand, at least, a passing notice. It was necessary, however, to consider at some length the passage that has been examined, because upon a natural and fair interpretation of its words, Pre-millennialists are willing to rest their case. It is not denied that it was the precise object of the Apostle to warn the Thessalonians against the error of supposing that the literal and personal advent of Christ was at hand, or had come. He goes on to show them that this literal and personal advent could not be, until an apostasy first comes, terminating in the revelation of the man of sin, or the lawless one, who shall be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. As it is admitted by all that the Apostle had in view the literal and personal advent, in correcting the mistake into which his brethren had fallen, and as it is admitted by all

that he predicts what must occur before the literal and personal advent can take place, is it not perfectly obvious that he refers to the literal and personal advent when he speaks of the brightness of Christ's coming? If a community were thrown into violent agitation by a rumor that a distinguished personage was about to arrive or had already arrived, and a herald of this personage should announce that he would not appear until certain events had transpired, surely it would not be admissible to suppose that the herald meant by his appearing some sort of spiritual coming, or something wholly unlike a personal presence.

But suppose the herald, in his proclamation, should refer to the coming of this personage twelve distinct times, and in eleven of these instances it is universally understood and admitted that the coming is literal and personal. Surely it would not be admissible to take it for granted, without the authority of the herald himself, that in the twelfth instance he did not allude to a real coming, but to an influence exerted through the agency of another. Yet this is what we have in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. Twelve times reference is made to the coming of Christ, and in eleven of these instances, all agree that the coming is literal and personal. It is certainly a dangerous principle of interpretation

which leads so many to say that, in the twelfth instance, the coming is not to be taken in this sense; and especially when it has been proved that the word "brightness" as elsewhere used in the New Testament invariably means *appearing*, and the word "coming" as elsewhere used in the New Testament invariably refers to a personal presence. Add to this that the mystery of iniquity at work in the Apostle's day would increase until its culmination in the man of sin who is to be destroyed, not converted, but *destroyed* by the appearing of Christ, and it seems impossible that the Millennium can intervene before the second advent of our Lord.

(5). Glancing backward a little through the Sacred Scriptures, we are told that "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," (Rom. viii: 19–23). Dr. Hodge says the word here translated "creature" and "creation" means "the creation, in the popular sense of that word—the earth, with all it contains, animate and inanimate,

man excepted;" and he also says this "is the opinion of the great majority of Commentators of all ages." Haldane says, "Creatures destitute of intelligence, animate and inanimate, the heavens and the earth, the elements, the plants and animals, are here referred to." Lange says, "even the poor creatures, whose heads are bowed toward the ground, now seized by a higher impulse, by a supernatural anticipation and longing, seem to stretch out their heads and look forth spiritually for a spiritual object of their existence;" and at the close of the discussion, the American translator adds, "it is so natural to refer this phrase to the glorification of the body at the coming of Christ, that it is unnecessary to state arguments in favor of this reference."

That the redemption of the body will not take place until the literal and personal advent of Christ is a truth held fast by every Church and by every class of expositors. The whole creation, therefore, is said to be looking forward with sad, longing gaze and outstretched neck, not to an impersonal reign of righteousness, but to the redemption of our body, and hence, to the coming of Christ as the end of its travailing throes. But if inanimate creation will not be delivered from the curse until the second coming of Christ,

how certain it is that there can be no Millennium before His personal advent! What incongruity there would be, what shocking disharmony would prevail, if the songs of regenerated mankind, rejoicing in the knowledge of the glory of God that shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas, must mingle for a thousand years with the groans of suffering creation! Alford says, "the idea of the renovation and glorification of all nature, at the revelation of the glory of our returned Saviour, will need no apology, nor seem strange to the readers of this commentary, nor to the students of the following, and many other passages of the prophetic word: Isa. xi; lxv; Rev. xxi; 2 Pet. iii: 13; Acts iii: 21." Dr. Chalmers says of the creation mentioned in the passage under consideration, "Meanwhile it is in sore labour; and the tempest's sigh, and the meteor's flash, and not more the elemental war than the conflict and the agony that are upon all spirits—the vexing care, and the heated enterprise, and the fierce emulation, and the battle-cry both that rings among the inferior tribes throughout the amplitude of unpeopled nature and that breaks as loudly upon the ear from the shock of civilized men—above every thing the death, the sweeping, irresistible death, which makes such havoc among all the ranks of animated nature,

and carries off as with a flood its successive generations—these are the now overhanging evils of a world that has departed from its God." But if these evils are to continue until the second coming of the Lord, surely there can be no Millennium except one that will fill the heart of the Christian with constant sorrow, before the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Then, and not till then, according to the plain testimony of the Apostle will come the millennial rest of the creature that "was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of one who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

(6). We read, in Peter's address to the Jews soon after the day of Pentecost, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began," (Acts iii: 19–21). The word translated *when* in the first verse of this passage occurs more than fifty times in the New

Testament, and is never elsewhere rendered as it is here. Dr. J. A. Alexander says "*when* corresponds to a compound particle in Greek, which always elsewhere, like the uncompounded form when followed by the same mood, denotes the final cause or the effect (*so that*, *in order that*)." He adds that the English version, "besides its violation of a uniform and constant usage, has the grave inconvenience of postponing their repentance, or at least their absolution, to some future time, if not to what we are accustomed to call Christ's second advent." Alford says, "it can have but one sense — *in order that*."

The Apostle, then, does not call upon the Jews to repent *when* the times of refreshing shall come, but *so that*, *in order that* the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things. In other words, just as in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, he leaps forward in the eagerness of his desire to the close of the dispensation of which he was then witnessing the commencement, and declares that "the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come," so here, in his own striking language, he would hasten the coming of the day of God, by urging

the Jews to repent, so that the times of refreshing might come, and the heaven might give back Jesus who must remain away until the times of restitution or restoration of all things, which had formed the theme of all the holy prophets since the world began. What impression would this language make upon an unprejudiced reader of the Bible, who had never heard of any theory concerning the Millennium? When he learns that the heaven must receive Christ *until* the times of restitution of all things, would he infer that Christ will be in heaven until the *end* of these times, or until the *beginning?*

Suppose an absent friend, for whose presence you are longing, should write that he must stay where he is until Spring, or the times of the renewing of nature after the sleep of winter, would you suppose that he meant the beginning, or the end of Spring? Is it not apparent that the very purpose of sending Jesus Christ from heaven is to bring about the restitution of all things, instead of appearing at the close of these times? Those who reject this view insist that the restitution of all things means the fulfillment of all things; but in the first place, the argument proves too much; for among the all things to be fulfilled are the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment; and it will not be said by any that Christ must

stay away until a period subsequent to these events. It is certain, therefore, that He will come in person before *all* things are fulfilled. In the second place, the word translated "restitution" does not mean fulfillment. Robinson's Lexicon of the New Testament defines it as "a full establishment; hence restoration, restitution from decay or ruin." Bagster defines it as "a restitution or restoration of a thing to its former state; hence the renovation of a new and better era." Liddell and Scott's Classical Lexicon defines it as "a complete restoration, re-establishment, restitution." Alford says, "Certainly, *to restore* is its usual import, and most strikingly so, accompanied however with the notion of a *glorious* and *complete* restoration, in chap. i: 6. To render our word *fulfillment*, and apply it to all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began, is against all precedent. And in the sense of *restoration*, I can not see how it can be applied to the work of the Spirit, as proceeding, during this the interim-state in the hearts of men. This would be contrary to all Scripture analogy."

It seems clear that the Apostle Peter is referring to the same period mentioned by the Apostle Paul, when he represents the whole creation as groaning and travailing together in pain, waiting

for the redemption of the body at the coming of Christ. Every thing connected with man shared in the curse pronounced against our first parents on account of their sin. It is not true that the threatened penalty of death was arrested, or even delayed after their transgression, but the moment they plucked the forbidden fruit, they became dead; not injured merely, not retaining a spark of divine life, as it is sometimes said, not placed on the ground of a new probation; but they became *dead* in trespasses and sins, and the pall of that death reached to their remotest posterity, and to all that had been subject to their dominion. Where sin abounded, however, grace did much more abound, and it pleased God to send His Son, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." In virtue of His mediatorial work, He acquired, as Head of the new creation in whom believers have life, an indefeasible title to that province of His boundless empire which revolted from His authority; and here upon the arena of His adversary's choosing, He will win a glorious triumph over Satan. This is the object of the millennial dispensation. All the departments of nature, involved in the consequences of the first man's shameful defeat, must exhibit the fruits of

the second man's magnificent victory; and to inaugurate the restoration, again will it please God to send His Son, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things. When those times begin He will come, and therefore, there can be no Millennium worthy the name before His return to the earth.

CHAPTER XIII.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

(7). IN the Gospel according to St. Luke we are told that "As some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" (Luke xxi: 5–7). Here, the question has reference simply and only to the time when there should not be one stone left upon another in the temple, that should not be thrown down. Our Lord proceeds to answer this question, predicting, as signals of the approaching destruction, great earthquakes in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and sights and signs from heaven which, we do not need the testimony of the Jewish and Roman historians Josephus and Tacitus to inform us, literally took place. But the Saviour still further says,

"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written [that is, obviously, concerning the coming desolation of Israel] may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," (Luke xxi: 20–24).

There is no controversy with regard to the literal fulfillment of this prophecy. Jerusalem was literally destroyed, and the stones of which its magnificent temple was built, although some of them are said to have been more that sixty feet long, eight feet high, and ten feet broad, were literally thrown down, and the very foundations ploughed up. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." The disciples could not possibly have understood our Lord

to mean anything but the literal Jerusalem where they stood when He uttered the prediction. So too, when He added, "they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," they were compelled to understand Him as speaking of the literal Jerusalem. But if so, it is certain they would anticipate a restoration of the city of the Israelites, for our Lord says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." There is no meaning in the language unless the word *until* implies that a time is coming, when Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles; but after the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years, we know that the time is not yet, because the times of the Gentiles are not yet run out. Various attempts have been made to set aside this prediction, all of which, of course, have resulted in ignominious failure; for it is not the rash utterance of a crazed enthusiast, nor the crafty speech of a base impostor, but the sad and solemn announcement of God manifest in the flesh.

Julian, the apostate, summoned the resources of his mighty empire to defeat it, but in the language of Gibbon, "the joint efforts of power and

enthusiasm were unsuccessful; and the ground of the Jewish temple, which is now occupied by a Mahometan Mosque, still continued to exhibit the same edifying spectacle of ruin and desolation. . . . An earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundation of the temple, are attested, with some variations, by contemporary and respectable evidence. This public event is described by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in an epistle to the Emperor Theodosius, which must provoke the severe animadversion of the Jews; by the eloquent Chrysostom, who might appeal to the memory of the elder part of his congregation at Antioch; and by Gregory Nazianzen, who published his account of the miracle before the expiration of the same year. The last of these writers has boldly declared, that this præternatural event was not disputed by the infidels; and his assertion, strange as it may seem, is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus. The philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues, without adopting the prejudices, of his master, has recorded, in his judicious and candid history of his own times, the extraordinary obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem. 'Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged, with vigor

and diligence, the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen ; and the victorious element continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned.' Such authority should satisfy a believing, and must astonish an incredulous mind."—(Decline and Fall, Vol. II, pp. 438–9). However Gibbon and the scientists may account for it, the *fact* is, the temple was not rebuilt.

Every one knows the result of the Crusades, undertaken on such a gigantic scale and with such heroic devotedness, to rescue the holy sepulchre from the grasp of the Moslem. Centuries have rolled by, empires have risen, flourished, and decayed, but Jerusalem remains, and will remain "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;" and then no power can prevent its return to the possession of God's ancient people, just as no power has been able to defeat the remarkable prediction of our Lord during the long period of Gentile supremacy. But He, whose word has been proved to be true in the eyes of all men, also tells us what shall immediately follow the

fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles. His testimony agrees precisely with that of the Holy Ghost given by Daniel, Zechariah, and other inspired writers, and none of them convey the slightest intimation that a Millennium will intervene between the times of the Gentiles and the "in-bringing of all Israel," as Dr. David Brown calls it; but all alike assert that the former will close amid scenes of fearful judgment, and that the latter will be accomplished by the personal advent of Christ. If He had wished His disciples to expect a Millennium without His presence, surely the opportunity to teach the doctrine was presented in connection with the long-continued desolation of Jerusalem reaching onward until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. But precisely the opposite doctrine is taught in the startling language that immediately follows the prophecy we have just considered.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to

come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled," (Luke xxi: 25–32).

The opinion commonly and thoughtlessly entertained, that this passage refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, is worse than absurd, for, in the first place, it is fatal to any correct understanding of God's word. The principle of interpretation on which it rests, if there is any *principle* of interpretation about it, will do away with the most distinct and important statements of the Sacred Scriptures, provided they do not suit the prejudices and whims of the reader. If the language, "then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory," means the coming of Titus at the head of a Roman army, we are bound to concede that almost identically the same language employed by the Saviour when He said to the high priest, "ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of

heaven," must also mean the coming of Titus at the head of a Roman army; and hence, there can be no personal coming of Christ, and no judgment, at any time.

In the second place, it is said, "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh;" but in no conceivable sense did the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus bring nigh the redemption of believers. If it be suggested that they were thus delivered from the persecutions of the Jews in that city, it was only to be exposed to the fiercer persecutions of the Jews and the Gentiles elsewhere, and surely it would be difficult to imagine how the success of Titus affected in any manner the redemption of those who trusted in Jesus. But the signs that shall cause them to lift up their heads and to know that their redemption draweth nigh, instead of being gathered from the universal triumph of the Church, are found in the distress of nations with perplexity and the failing of men's hearts for fear; nor is there the faintest intimation that this season of alarm and terror is preceded by a spiritual Millennium. The times of the Gentiles must be fulfilled, which will end, as has been shown, in a more humiliating exhibition of the pravity of human nature, and in a fuller apostasy from

God, than even the times of ancient Israel; and then the very next step is the coming of the Son of Man.

In the third place, in no respect could it be said at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, "that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand;" for in the state in which the kingdom of God now exists, it had been set up before; or if it be supposed that allusion is made to the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, that dispensation had commenced long previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost. Those who are looking for a Millennium without Christ, or a kingdom without a King, are very fond of quoting the text in the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke, "the kingdom of God is within you;" but they do not observe that these words are addressed to the Pharisees, of whom it will scarcely be said that the kingdom of God was within *them;* nor do they notice that the proper reading, as given in the margin and by all critics, is, "the kingdom of God is *among you;*" nor do they reflect that in the very chapter containing the words, the universal prevalence of wickedness at the coming of Christ is plainly asserted, without so much as a hint of the previous success of the Church. The kingdom of God was already at hand when

the King was here, and therefore, it could not be said concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem, "Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

In the fourth place, if it is urged that the Saviour's declaration, "this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled," forces us to the conclusion that He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the reply is, this can not possibly be, because among the *all* things to be fulfilled, are His coming in a cloud with power and great glory, the resurrection and the judgment, none of which occurred when the city was taken by the Romans. It has already been shown that the word *generation* even in our English Dictionaries also means "a family; a race; a stock; breed;" and thus it is often used in the word of God. "Thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever," (Ps. xii: 7). "God is in the generation of the righteous," (Ps. xiv: 5). "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation," (Ps. xxii: 30). "If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children," (Ps. lxxiii: 15). "The generation of the upright shall be blessed," (Ps. cxii: 2). "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light," (Luke xvi: 8). "But ye

are a chosen generation," (1 Pet. ii: 9). Dr. Hodge says, "The declaration contained in Matt. xxiv: 34, 'This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled,' must be restricted to the 'all things' spoken of, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem and the inauguration of the Church as Christ's kingdom on earth. There is, however, high authority for making *this generation*, here and in the parallel passages, Mark xiii: 30 and Luke xxi: 32, refer to Israel as a people or race; in this case the meaning would be that the Jews would not cease to be a distinct people until his predictions were fulfilled."—(Systematic Theology, Vol. III, p. 799).

In the fifth place, our Lord immediately adds to the language just quoted the solemn admonition, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man," (Luke xxi: 34–36). This passage conclusively shows that He did not have reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, for that day

did not come as a snare set for an unwary bird "on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Obviously the allusion is to a far more terrific and general judgment, and if so, how certain it is that there can be no Millennium previous to the personal advent of Christ. The whole chapter is filled with predictions of calamities, persecutions, sufferings, woes, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and what then? A long period of peace and prosperity and righteousness? Not a word of it, but "upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after these things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great glory." Christians, then, who are looking for the improvement of man, somewhat on the Darwinian or developement theory, and looking for the speedy triumph of the Church, especially their own particular sects, as if loyalty to these necessarily implied loyalty to the Lord, instead of "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ," might do well to heed the warning, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye might be accounted worthy to

escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

(8). In a preceeding part of the same gospel we are told that "As they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him saying, We will not have this man to reign over us," (Luke xix: 11–14). There can be no mistake concerning the general meaning and design of the parable, the first verses of which are here quoted. The disciples evidently expected that when He reached Jerusalem, He would proclaim Himself King, and raise Israel from its prostrate condition, and reign gloriously over the earth, according to many predictions of their prophets. Our Lord does not intimate that there would be no real and visible kingdom on the earth, but only that they were mistaken in thinking the kingdom of God should *immediately* appear. After His resurrection, with their thoughts still fixed on the promised kingdom here below,

"they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," (Acts i: 6, 7).

Neither here nor elsewhere does He utter a word which could lead His followers to understand that they had been in error in believing that Messiah would reign at the proper time and in person on the earth; but they overlooked the important fact, also announced in their Scriptures, that He must first be rejected and crucified, and come a second time to establish the kingdom they so eagerly desired. Dr. M'Caul, late Professor of Hebrew in King's College, and Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in a masterly argument to prove that "the doctrine of the second advent is an essential doctrine of the Gospel," remarks, "First, it is a doctrine which we find in every part of the Scriptures of the New Testament; not to refer now to the prophets, whose constant theme it is, and who often preach the second advent without mentioning the first, but who never preach the first advent without mentioning the second." It is not strange, then, that the disciples should regard the first advent in its relation to the second as the means in relation to the end; and forgetful of the

prophecies which describe the sufferings of Messiah, should hasten forward in their thoughts to the glory that is to follow, concluding that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." It is clear from this that the kingdom which they were expecting, or the Millennium, as it is now called, can not be inaugurated until His return.

That which is termed the kingdom of grace set up in the hearts of men, although no such expression is found in the Bible, had been already established; but it is plain that the disciples were looking for a manifested, powerful kingdom here on the earth, such as had been so frequently and fully predicted by the prophets. As Alford says upon the passage, "They imagined that the present journey to Jerusalem, undertaken as it had been with such publicity and accompanied with such wonderful miracles, was for the purpose of revealing and establishing the Messianic kingdom." He further says, "The ground-work of this part of the Parable seems to have been derived from the history of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great. The kings of the Herodian family made journeys to Rome, to receive their kingdom. On Archelaus's doing so, the Jews

sent after him a protest, which however was not listened to by Augustus." It will not be denied that the nobleman in the parable represents the Saviour Himself. Nor will it be disputed that by his going into a far country, we are to understand our Lord's ascension into heaven, where He will remain until "the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power" shall come; and then, invested with the authority, and dignity, and glory of the kingdom, He will return. Where then is the hope of seeing the triumph of the kingdom before His personal advent?

During the period of His absence, His ten servants are entrusted with ten pounds, and the command of their departed Lord rings in their hearing, "Occupy till I come." But this is not all. The parable which confessedly spans the whole interval between the first and second advent gives no hint that all, or that even the greater part of the race will be converted. On the other hand, "His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us." At length "*when he was returned, having received the kingdom*," He enters first into a settlement with His own servants, giving to him whose pound had gained ten pounds authority over ten cities,

and placing him whose pound had gained five pounds over five cities, and taking the pound from him who had kept it laid up in a napkin, in order to bestow it upon the one who had been most diligent and faithful. Then follows the stern order, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." Surely if our Lord had wished us to believe that there would be a thousand years of spiritual prosperity, distinguished, as Dr. David Brown says, "by the universal reception of the true religion," we might expect a glimpse, at least, of this happy period in the parable before us; but so far from this, the whole time of His absence is marked by the varying service of His friends and the unrelenting hostility of His enemies, up to his very return. It is impossible, therefore, to discover a space for the Millennium previous to His second personal advent.

(9). In a still earlier portion of the same gospel, we read the following earnest words: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall

find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. . . . Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers," (Luke xii: 35-46).

Here blessing is repeatedly pronounced upon the servants who stand with girded loins, and burning lights, and hands upon the hall door as it were, in an attitude of waiting and watching, now gazing out through the casement into the

darkness, and anon intently listening for the first foot-fall of their expected Master. The most wonderful thing is said about them, for He declares that He will gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them; the divine Bridegroom, to change the figure a little, attending upon the precious blood-bought bride at the marriage supper of the Lamb. But if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and as a consequence loses the place and the sense of responsibility, and begins to show his power by persecuting his fellow-servants, and lives like the thoughtless, pleasure seeking world around him, the Lord of that servant will unexpectedly appear to appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. It is not supposed that the servant will say in his heart, My Lord will never come, for none dare say that; but, My Lord *delayeth* His coming, and many are saying *that*. How far the present lamentable condition of the Church is owing to the popular belief of the day, which postpones the second advent for at least a thousand years, God only knows. It is quite certain, however, that no one can find this opinion in the passage before us. It is evident that no such thought was in the Saviour's mind, for He does not refer to a spiritual Millennium, but represents

His personal return to the earth as possible any day, bids His disciples look for Him continually, and warns them against the dangers of thinking that He delays His coming. They have not heeded the warning, and the predicted consequences of their disregard are now everywhere seen among those who profess to be His servants. Will not the threatened penalty follow?

CHAPTER XIV.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

(10). THE discourse of our Lord in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, although previously noticed, is so important in its bearing upon the question before us, that it demands renewed consideration. It does not seem to be the same discourse which is recorded in the twenty-first chapter of Luke. In the twentieth chapter of the latter gospel we find that "He taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel." So in the twenty-first chapter He is seen in the temple, where "He looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury." It further appears that while still there, "as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones," He delivered the discourse recorded by Luke, which refers, as has been shown, so largely to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and to its continued desolation, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and the Son of Man shall come in a cloud with power and great glory.

Accordingly Luke tells us what was said by our Lord while He taught in the temple, and of course before He left the city.

Matthew, however, tells us what He said on the Mount of Olives to a few of His disciples after He had withdrawn from public view, sorrowfully exclaiming, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," (Matt. xxiii: 37–39). His personal ministry, therefore, was ended at the time of the discourse recorded by Matthew, and He had gone forth in deep grief from the doomed city, whose inhabitants shall see Him no more until they shall LOOK upon Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him, as one mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.

"And Jesus went out and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things?

verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Subsequently "As he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Strictly speaking, there are three questions here, though probably the disciples, with Jewish pride in the stability of their magnificent temple, regarded its destruction as possible only at the second coming of the Lord, and at the end of the world, or of the age, as the word should have been rendered. Or it may be they had in view what He had previously said in the temple about its overthrow, and He is led to repeat substantially the discourse they had already heard, as He frequently did, only applying it differently to other circumstances and objects. However this may be, Peter and James and John and Andrew, as Mark informs us, came to Him privately, as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" The answer which follows touches so lightly the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, if it touches it at all, that Alford does not hesitate to entitle the discourse a "Prophecy of His coming, and of the times of

the end." Lange also says, "in harmony with apocalyptic style, He exhibited the judgments of His coming in a series of cycles, each of which depicts the whole futurity, but in such a manner that with every new cycle the scene seems to approximate to, and more closely resemble the final catastrophe. Thus the first cycle delineates the whole course of the world down to the end, in its general characteristics, (verses 4–14)."

He tells them of attempts that will be made to deceive them; of wars and rumours of wars; of nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; of famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places, which He declares to be but the beginning of sorrows; of afflictions, and persecutions, and the scorn of all nations coming upon them; of many among His professed disciples who shall be offended, and betray one another, and hate one another, while many shall be deceived; of iniquity abounding, and the love of many waxing cold; and closes the sad description by saying, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world [the habitable earth, as the word means] for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Truly there is nothing here that looks like a Millennium, and this state of things shall continue, we are told, until the end shall come. It is important,

too, to notice, that our Lord does not say that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the habitable earth for the conversion of all nations, but for a witness unto all nations, or as Mark has it, "the gospel must first be published among all nations," and the end will be at hand.

Such is the first section, or cycle as Lange calls it, of the discourse, bringing us to the time of the end when, as may be shown hereafter, the Church of the present dispensation will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, although there will be a faithful remnant of believing Jews still waiting for the consolation of Israel. To these our Lord next addresses His warnings, saying, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains: . . . but pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: for there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false

prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . . For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Truly there is nothing in this section, as there was nothing in the former, that looks like a Millennium, but precisely the reverse. There shall be great tribulation, such as the world never before saw, so severe and wide-spread, that all flesh must be destroyed except for the shortening of those days; and false Christs and false prophets shall arise, showing great signs and wonders, which we are told in Revelation will be witnessed during the reign of the Lawless one; and thus it will continue up to the lightning-like coming of the Son of Man.

Turning to the passage in Daniel to which our Lord refers, we read, "At that time [the time of the reign of Antichrist] shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people [the Jews] shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to

shame and everlasting contempt. . . . And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days [literal days, as may be shown]. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days," (Dan. xii).

It is plain, then, that the judgment upon the Jews, to which both Daniel and our Lord allude, is still future, for at that time Michael, the great prince, shall stand up in their behalf, and they shall be delivered; and then too, to adopt the literal rendering of Tregelles, "Many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those [the rest of the sleepers] shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt." It is needless to say that the Jews were not delivered when they were slaughtered and sold into captivity by Titus, nor was there anything like the resurrection, mentioned by the prophet, at the destruction of their sacred city. The reference, therefore, is to a period yet to come, when the Lawless one so often predicted in the Old and New Testaments, shall have full sway, and when it will be seen

that the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans was only a faint shadow of another and greater tribulation, such as was never known before and shall never be known again. Jeremiah, for example, predicts the sufferings that shall then be endured by God's ancient people, and exclaims, "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it," (Jer. xxx: 6, 7). Zechariah also tells us, as previously noticed, that all nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women rāvished; but the Lord shall go forth, and fight against those nations, and His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives.

Many other passages of Scripture speak of this second and unequalled visitation of wrath that is to fall upon a people still so inveterate in their prejudices, and so obstinate in their rejection of the Messiah; but according to the testimony of our Lord what is to occur *immediately* after the unparallelled tribulation? A thousand years of temporal and spiritual prosperity without His

personal presence? Let Him answer. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," (Matt. xxiv: 29–31).

It is useless to object that, following these words, the Saviour says, "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," for the objection has already been effectually set aside; and surely no intelligent Christian will assert that all these things, including the mourning of all the tribes of the earth, and the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, and the gathering together of His elect from the four winds, occurred in the life time of the men then living. The coming is obviously literal and personal, for the question of the disciples, all admit, was concerning His literal and personal return to the earth; and twelve times in the entire discourse does He allude to His second

advent, in every instance in a literal and personal sense, as even post-millennialists agree, unless it be in the passage last quoted. Does this passage, then, form an exception to the rule? If not it is certain there can be no Millennium till He comes, for not only is there a total absence of all allusion to a thousand years of triumph for the Church, but there is no possible space for such triumph up to the very day that shall witness the appearing of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. Each section or cycle of the discourse running to the close of the present age is crowded with predictions of continuous trials, and immediately after the great tribulation Jesus Himself shall come. Hence the remainder of chapter twenty-four is occupied with solemn admonitions to watchfulness, because of that day and hour knoweth no man; only we know that the world will be as it was just before the flood, wholly devoted to the cares of business, the enjoyment of wealth, and the pursuit of pleasure, and not to the cause of Christ, when He shall return.

(11). At the beginning of chapter twenty-five we read, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took

no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." The particle "then" with which this passage begins is not a mere connective, but it properly means, as Alford translates it in his revised New Testament, "at that time." He also says, "The obvious question there to ask is, 'at *what* time?' And it will be best answered by referring to what went before. On doing so, we find that our Lord had just been speaking of the time during which He, the Master of the household, should be absent, and His coming expected. . . . And thus in the case before us we may, if it seem best, regard the time described by Christ as covering the whole of the period intervening His removal from us and the second advent; the time during which it might be said by the servant, 'My Lord delayeth his coming'; the time, in short, in which we live. The chief and strict application of the parable may be, and I believe, is, to one portion of that long interval; but unquestionably, it is not applicable to that portion only," (The Coming of the Bridegroom, pp. 6, 7).

But admitting that our Lord had in view, as probably He did, the state of the Church just before His second advent, it is said, they all slumbered, or nodded, and slept. Where is there

the slightest intimation that at any time during the entire period of His absence, they shall be alert and active, covering the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the seas, and securing the universal reception of the true religion for a thousand happy years? It is the merest assumption to assert that a spiritual Millennium precedes the slumbering at the close, for if this were true, it is inconceivable that there should not be a hint of it in all this remarkable discourse, nor anywhere else in the New Testament. It may well humble the pride and abate the boastful spirit of the Church to remember that not only some, but that all slumbered and slept, plainly with reference to our Lord's second coming; and it seems that this profound insensibility has already set in as the result of the dreadful reaction which must necessarily follow the rash predictions and reckless speculations of so many pre-millennial writers who confidently asserted that Louis Napoleon was the Antichrist, or who fixed the very year of our Saviour's return.

It does not fall within the purpose of this work to discuss the question whether the foolish virgins represent those who barely have spiritual life, and, therefore, shall in the end be saved, yet so as by fire; or whether they are types of hypocrites

and self-deceived persons found in the Church. It is enough to know that the entire number, wise and foolish alike, nodded and slept, and that when the midnight cry was heard, "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," all the virgins had to be aroused from their slumber to trim their lamps; while one-half of them discovering that their lamps had gone out, or rather were going out, were unprepared to receive the Lord, and were consequently excluded from the marriage. It is quite certain, then, that at the time of His coming the professing Church as a body will not be in a state of millennial expectation and righteousness and joy; nor can such a state precede His coming, for in a lengthy discourse confessedly treating of the last times there is not a word that can be tortured into the remotest allusion to a spiritual Millennium in the twenty-fourth chapter; while in the twenty-fifth, after speaking of the slumbering virgins who need to be awakened, the next scene presents the family settlement which our Lord has with His own servants, and the next His judgment upon the living nations.

Men may argue ably against the pre-millennial advent of our Lord, as does Dr. David Brown, but after all, the question remains, "what saith the Scripture?" He may prove, at least to his

own satisfaction, that "the Church will be absolutely complete at Christ's coming"; that "Christ's second coming will exhaust the object of the Scriptures"; that "the sealing ordinances will disappear at Christ's second coming"; that "the intercession of Christ, and the work of the Spirit, for saving purposes, will cease at the second advent"; but all this, with much more that he says, does not prove that there will be a Millennium of holiness and happiness before our Lord's return. In the nature of the case it can not be proved by human reasoning, human prejudice, human pride in our ecclesiastical organizations; and when we find in the extended remarks made by the Saviour in response to a question concerning His second advent, that He does not once even whisper of the triumph of the Church, but on the other hand fills the entire interval of His absence with predictions of sorrows and sufferings, we are forced to the conclusion that there will be no Millennium at all, or, as the only alternative, that there can be NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

CHAPTER XV.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

(12). IN the thirteenth chapter of Matthew we have a series of parables which seem to be conclusive upon the subject now under consideration. They mark a distinct period and peculiar feature in our Lord's teachings, and if we would understand their import, they must be studied, as all parts of Scripture should be studied, in the light of their surroundings and connections. At the beginning of the chapter we are told that "THE SAME DAY went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables."

In order, then, to know what day it was when He began to teach in parables, we are thrown back into the preceding chapter, where He pronounces the solemn doom of Israel for their rejection of Himself as the promised Messiah. "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment

with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Then announcing that He no longer recognized natural relationships, as of mother and brethren, because they had lost their charm for the rejected One, He stretched forth His hand with a longing gesture to His disciples, exclaiming, Behold my mother and my brethren! *The same day* He went out of the house, as an act significant in itself of His departure from unbelieving Israel, and sat by the sea side, and commenced to teach in parables.

The disciples came to Him to inquire why He

spoke to the people in parables, for they had never heard this form of teaching before. "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosover hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

The phrase "the kingdom of heaven" is found thirty-two times in the gospel now before us, and it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. This is in accordance with the design of Matthew, who was led by the Holy Ghost to present our Lord, even in the opening verse of his gospel, as "the Son of David, the son of Abraham," and, therefore, as the promised King of Israel, while

it was reserved for Mark to describe Him as the faithful Servant predicted in the Old Testament; and for Luke to speak of Him as the Son of Man; and for John to set Him forth as the Son of God. Hence the absurdity of all attempted Harmonies, as they are called, of the four gospels. Four biographies of George Washington might be written; one with special reference to his career as Commander-in-chief of the American army; another having chiefly in view his character and conduct as President; another mainly occupied with his actions as a citizen and planter; and another portraying him in domestic life in the bosom of his family. While there would be harmony, in one sense, in these four biographies, if they all uttered the truth, it would be foolish to regard them as precisely parallel or synonymous. So it is with the four gospels, and unless we keep this in mind, there will be little comfort or profit derived from their perusal.

It must not be forgotten, then, that it was the purpose of the Holy Ghost in Matthew to reveal Christ as legally the son of Joseph, a lineal descendant of the house of Solomon; thus establishing His legal right to sit upon the throne of David, and then confirming this right in the proof adduced that He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, by tracing His lineage directly to

Abraham, where the Evangelist stops. One of the most acute and critical of Bible students remarks, "That the Spirit of God, when inspiring Matthew, had in view the aspirations and wants of the Jews, the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus, and the consequences of His rejection both for them and the Gentiles, is a truth which has forced itself on most Christians who have examined the gospel with any discriminating care. So large and varied are the internal proofs of such a design, that the only wonder is how an intelligent mind could dispute the facts or the inference." Among the internal proofs might be mentioned the inquiry of the wise men from the east, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. ii: 2); the preaching of John the Baptist, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matt. iii: 2); the preaching of our Lord Himself, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matt. iv: 17); the preaching of the twelve disciples, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matt. x: 7); besides frequent mention of Old Testament Scriptures fulfilled in Him as David's royal Son.

In this character He presented Himself to Israel, and was rejected. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," (John i: 11). The king being disowned, the kingdom was in

abeyance, which is defined by Blackstone as follows: "When there is no person in existence in whom an inheritance can vest, it is said to be in *abeyance*, that is, in expectation; the law considering it as always potentially existing, and ready to vest whenever a proper owner appears." Our Lord did not relinquish His claim, nor surrender His right, but from that time He began to teach in parables and to speak of the *mysteries* of the kingdom. In due time He will be recognized and proclaimed as King on the very spot where He was despised and put to death, but meanwhile in adorable grace He is gathering out of the nations a vast multitude to be associated with Him in the glory and blessedness of His manifested kingdom. "The kingdom of heaven," therefore, is a phrase which implies the rule of heaven having its sphere on the earth; and in the form in which it now exists and will exist until the king's return, being in abeyance, or continuing in mystery, or hidden from human observation, it is equivalent to the present Christian dispensation. That it contains the bad as well as the good, false professors as well as the true children of God, is made abundantly evident from quite a number of our Lord's parables.

With these preliminary remarks let us glance at the group contained in the chapter under

examination. The first is as follows: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold."

Happily we have our Lord's own interpretation of the parable, and therefore need not err in seeking to know its precise meaning. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world,

and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty."

It only remains to notice whether the Saviour referred to a particular period during the continuance of the kingdom in its mysterious or hidden state, or whether He had in view the entire dispensation including the whole time between His first and second coming. If the former is correct He certainly would have made some allusion to the fact, but He gives no hint that the relative proportion of those who hear the word with profit will ever be reversed during the age in which we live. There is nothing in the parable itself by which we are led to suppose that he designed to limit its application to the first preaching of the word, but every thing in the context, and in subsequent history to prove that He was traversing the future to the close of the kingdom in mystery, and to the appearing of the kingdom in manifested power at His return. Hence expositors of every class seem to be agreed in giving it this wider scope.

Trench says, "I can not doubt that the Lord intended to set Himself forth as the chief sower,

of the word, not, of course, to the exclusion of the apostles and their successors." Wordsworth (High Church) says, "This chapter may be described as containing a Divine Treatise on the Church Militant here on earth. . . . It is observable, that all these Parables of our Lord, concerning the *Kingdom of Heaven*, are declaratory rather of the condition of the Church in its *present mixed and imperfect state on the earth*, than of its *future condition* in heaven." Ryle (Low Church) says, "It is being continually verified under our own eyes. Whenever the word of God is preached or expounded, and people are assembled to hear it, the sayings of our Lord in this parable are found to be true. It describes what goes on, as a general rule, in all congregations." Alford says, "The sower is first the Son of Man, then His ministers and servants to the end." Dr. J. Addison Alexander says, it "shows the various receptions which the word or doctrine of the kingdom would meet with in the hearts of men." Barnes says, "The seed represents the word of God communicated in any manner to the minds of men, by the Scriptures, by preaching, by acts of providence, or by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit." Olshausen says, "Our Lord draws a parallel between the four kinds of fields, and the four

kinds of disposition of heart in those who receive the word of God, scattered abroad." Lange says, "To the Jews and to mere nominal Christians, this parable conveys the solemn truth that only part of the soil which is sown bears fruit. Of course, anything like an arithmetical calculation of the fourth part is out of the question; still, it implies that the number of God's people is small." Stier says, "Christ here comprises in three principal classes really all, one might almost say, the thousand fold kinds and mixtures of the soil that yield no fruit unto the harvest."

Without quoting from other writers to the same effect, it seems that we can not, except by doing violence to the parable, limit its application to the times of Christ or of His Apostles. But if extended through the present dispensation, where is there the slightest intimation that, previous to the coming of our Lord, all, or nearly all the soil will become good ground, and all, or nearly all the seed will become fruitful? The Saviour evidently designed to show what results would follow the sowing of the seed, or the preaching of the word, during the existence of the kingdom in mystery or concealment; and if He knew that the gospel would gain universal sway before His second advent, most certainly He would have encouraged the sowers to toil on, in the joyful

expectation that in due time their labors should be crowned with abundant success, and bring forth a plentiful harvest to beautify every land.

Instead of this, He warns His ministers and followers, if they had ears to hear, not to look for the triumphant progress of His cause and the universal reception of His gospel; for He tells them that the truth falling upon one class will be like seed quickly caught up and devoured by fowls, or birds, as the word is rendered in the same chapter; and that these birds represent the wicked one, or as it is translated in Mark, Satan, or as Luke has it, the devil. Another class will exhibit but a transient interest in the precious testimonies of grace; another class will find the springing germ of divine truth stifled with the care of this world, or with the deceitfulness of riches; while only a small proportion will abound in the fruits of the Spirit, and of these there will be various degrees of increase, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.

Thus it has been for more than eighteen hundred years, and thus it is now. Have we any reason to suppose that it will be otherwise in the time to come, unless we have a clear and explicit promise of God's word? But such a promise can not be found, for it would be in direct conflict with our Lord's testimony here and elsewhere, as

already shown. Can any one point to a single state, county, city, or village on the face of the earth where all the inhabitants are true Christians, bringing forth fruit even thirty fold? Without entering upon "a mathematical calculation of the fourth part," as Lange calls it, all will admit that not one-fourth of those who hear the gospel are converted; and accurate observation would surely reveal the humiliating fact that not one-fourth who profess to be converted manifest in their lives any real separation from the world, or bear fruit in sustained personal work for the glory of our Saviour's name. But may we not expect a permanent change for the better in this respect, long before Christ shall come? The Parable of the Sower answers, NO.

(13). The correctness of this conclusion is rendered still more certain by an examination of the next parable, in which our Lord says, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them

an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Of this parable also we have a divine interpretation, and can not, therefore, fall into error with regard to its teaching, if we are subject to the authority of our Lord's word, without any preconceived opinions and prejudices. After Jesus had sent the multitude away, He entered into the house, and His disciples came unto Him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man: the field is the world, [that is, the world in the ordinary sense as implying the ordered and habitable globe]; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [literally, *the age*, an entirely different word from that just before translated *the world*]; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the

tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world [age]. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

It is plainly revealed in this solemn passage, not only that there will be many from whose hearts, as stated in the former parable, the wicked one catcheth away the word; but that by the agency of the same wicked one, the bad seed of error and evil would soon be mingled with the good seed of truth and righteousness, and thus the special sphere for the exercise of the rule of heaven during its continuance in mystery would speedily become corrupted. It is just as clearly revealed that the tares once introduced into the field will continue to grow until the harvest; or that the visible organizations for carrying on the work of the Lord, once corrupted, will remain corrupt until the end of the age or dispensation; when, as all admit, Christ will personally return to the earth. There is not the slightest hint that those represented by the tares

are to be converted, but it is said, "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Nor is there any allusion to those who are not in His kingdom, but simply to what is called the kingdom of heaven in its present state, including the bad and the good, and which, it is distinctly declared, will not be purified until the angels shall be sent forth, who, we know, attend the personal coming of the Son of Man. Dr. David Brown labors hard to break the tremendous force of the testimony in favor of the pre-millennial advent found in this parable, which our Lord Himself explains, and at last glides over it with the strange assertion that it was designed "to set forth the *mixed* character of the visible Church till Christ come: all are agreed in this. But the Millennium is as *truly*, though not in the same *degree*, a mixed state of the visible Church as this."

Such is his remarkable mode of meeting the difficulty, in the face of his own testimony as formerly quoted, that the Millennium "will be characterized by the *universal diffusion of revealed truth*," and "will be marked by the *universal reception of the true religion, and unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ.*"

How it can be marked by the *universal* reception of the true religion, and *unlimited* subjection to the sceptre of Christ, and at the same time be marked by the presence in the Church itself of the children of the wicked one, to say nothing of those who will not even profess to be the children of the kingdom, Dr. Brown does not attempt to explain. Least of all does he attempt to explain how this mixed state of the visible Church during the Millennium can be made to harmonize with such scriptures as the following, which post-millennialists are fond of quoting: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi: 9); "and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," (Jer. xxxi: 34).

These passages, and many more like them, when studied in the light of the parable at which we have glanced, forces upon us one of two conclusions: either Christ will come in person before the Millennium, or there will be no Millennium at all; and in the one case or the other, the

expectation of those who are looking for the speedy and complete triumph of the visible Church, and hence are closing their eyes to the increasing perils gathering about them, is worse than an idle dream. The tares will grow with the wheat until the harvest, and not a few here and there, but so numerous that the plucking up of the former would endanger the latter; the harvest is the end of the age or dispensation; and the reapers are the angels who, we are repeatedly told in the word of God, will attend the advent of our Lord. Thus the statement in the parable is in precise accordance with the testimony of the Holy Ghost in another portion of the Scriptures, previously noticed, where we are are taught that the mystery of iniquity already at work in the Apostle's day will continue and culminate in the Antichrist, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the epiphany of His personal presence.

(14). "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Arnot says this represents "the progress of the

kingdom under the idea of *a living growth"*; and while there can be no objection to this view, our Lord does not intimate that the tree would cover the earth, nor yet that it would tower in peerless majesty, unhindered by the plots of the same cunning and implacable enemy of whom He had so plainly spoken. Trench well remarks in his treatise On the Interpretation of Parables, "that when our Lord himself interpreted the two first which he delivered, those of the Sower, and of the Tares, it is more than probable that he intended to furnish us with a key for the interpretation of all. These explanations therefore are most important, not merely for their own sakes, but as laying down the principles and canons of interpretation to be applied throughout."

To this it may be added as obviously true, that no interpretation of the parable of the Mustard Seed, or of any subsequent parable, can be sound, which makes our Lord utter a flat contradiction to His own testimony as given in the two first parables which He Himself explained. There He announced that the word scattered abroad, like seed, will not bring all men to the exercise of faith, and to the possession of eternal life ; but only one part out of four will exhibit real fruitfulness, and this of various degrees. There too He declared that the tares sowed by the devil

while men slept, whether there is or is not an allusion in this to the carelessness of the watchmen and workmen, will continue to grow among the wheat until the end of the age, when He will come from heaven with His holy angels. While, therefore, it may be readily admitted that the parable of the Mustard Seed represents "the progress of the kingdom under the idea of a living growth," it can not possibly teach a doctrine the opposite of that clearly unfolded in the preceding parables.

But what do the post-millennialists make of the birds of the air that came and lodged in the branches of the tree? Many of them pass it over entirely, although our Lord, who never uttered a word in vain, surely had some object in introducing this remarkable feature into the brief parable. Dr. Alexander simply says, the birds "resort to it by choice as a convenient resting place." Stier and Trench think, to adopt the language of the latter, that "we are to recognize a prophecy of the refuge and defence that should be for all men in the Church." If they mean by this that the Church will be the refuge and defence of unconverted men, or that unconverted men will come into it, certainly such a condition of the Church would make anything but a Millennium of holiness and peace, for it need not be

said that unconverted men would utterly corrupt and destroy the cause of Christ. But if they mean that all men shall be converted, and then brought into the Church, the statement is equally absurd, for it presents a strange jumble of ideas and metaphors, of which no ordinary writer would be guilty, much less our blessed Lord. It is supposed that the Church is represented by the tree, and whoever heard of a tree growing by birds flying into it, and lodging in its branches? Nothing can be more unlike than a tree and a bird, and if by the growth of the tree we are to understand the expansion of the Church from a small beginning, *that* of itself implies conversion without the addition of something entirely foreign to it. The Church grows in no other way than by the conversion of men, and if this is all that is meant, by the introduction of the birds, the mention of them only confuses the mind, and mars a symbol which is already complete.

Unquestionably it is much more natural and reasonable to suppose that in a connected discourse where the Saviour employs the same figure of speech twice, He does not intend to teach two totally different things. Now in the parable of the Sower He tells us that the fowls represent the wicked one, or as Mark and Luke say, Satan and the devil. Let it be remembered that the

word translated "fowls" in the parable of the Sower is in the Greek precisely the same word which is translated "birds" in the parable of the Mustard Seed, and we can have no difficulty in understanding our Lord's meaning. If a public speaker should use a certain metaphor in our presence whose precise meaning he himself explained, and then almost immediately afterwards should use the very same metaphor without explanation, surely we would properly infer that he wished us to attach to it the same sense. When therefore the Master told His disciples what the birds represented, and in the same discourse again mentioned the birds, they certainly understood Him as meaning the same thing. If this is not a fixed principle of interpretation, there is an end of knowing what the Bible teaches on any subject. By this principle of interpretation, also, we bring the parable into perfect consistency with those that precede it. The devil who catches away the word dropped on the callous heart, and who sows tares in the midst of the wheat, here sees the wonderful growth of the kingdom of heaven from its feeble commencement, and as it is shooting into a great tree, seeks and obtains a place in it, to defeat if possible the loving purpose and gracious work of our divine Redeemer. Such then in another form is shown

to be the mixed condition of good and evil, of saving mercy and satanic hate, manifested during the continuance of the kingdom in mystery; and hence we again reach the conclusion that there can be no Millennium till Christ comes.

(15). "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The common view taken of these important words makes the leaven the type of gospel truth or righteousness penetrating and permeating the entire mass of mankind, and gradually converting the whole world to Jesus Christ.

But in the first place, it will be conceded that it has not leavened to any great extent so far, inasmuch as the number of Christians now on the earth is relatively as small or perhaps smaller than at the death of the last of the Apostles. Saint Paul wrote to the Colossians that the word of the truth of the gospel had come unto them, "as it is in all the world," (Col. i: 6); and that it "was preached to every creature which is under heaven," (vs. 23); and although some may deem this "a noble hyperbole," as Ellicott and Eadie call it, yet taken in connection with many other passages of the New Testament, it certainly indicates the rapid spread of the good news of

salvation in that day, as well as the divine intention to have the gospel preached to every creature. Justin Martyr, not much more than a hundred years after the crucifixion of Christ, reminds the Jew "there are some countries in which none of his nation ever dwelt; but there is not so much as one nation of men, whether Greek or barbarian, Scythian or Arabian, amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered up to the Father through the name of Jesus crucified." But in all the vast region where churches once flourished, founded by the Apostles, and some of them addressed in inspired epistles, there is scarcely a vestige of Christianity left; while Christendom itself is flooded with infidelity and vice, and not even the smallest community has been wholly brought under the saving power of redeeming love. Truly the leaven has been working slowly.

In the second place the ordinary view of the parable seems to regard humanity as a lump, overlooking the fact that the grace of God has to deal with each succeeding generation, and with every soul of each succeeding generation, as dead in trespasses and sins. There is a constant stream of nonsense poured forth on our platforms and in our pulpits about the progress of the age; but admitting all that is claimed, no real Christian

needs to be informed that all the babes, born in the present year, are as truly the children of wrath, as were the babes born in the days of Nero, or in the days of Noah. A tiger now is precisely what a tiger was more than four thousand years ago, and man now is precisely what man was after that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, entered into the Garden of Eden, and our first parents totally lost the spiritual life imparted to them at their creation. Even while granting, therefore, the increase of knowledge in some respects, and the achievements of science in ameliorating to some extent the temporal condition of mankind, it is only a very shallow thinker who will say that, during all the boasted march of civilization, human nature has improved in the slightest degree. Each member of the race comes into the world just as ignorant, just as helpless, just as depraved, just as dead in sins, as were the children of the Sodomites; and hence there is no possible sense in which the leaven, as generally understood, can leaven the mass, except by working more thoroughly in individual souls, and by spreading more rapidly from soul to soul. But whether this is to be must be determined by the testimony of other Scriptures.

In the third place, the soundness of the principle,

already advanced, will not be controverted, that the parable must be interpreted in such way as to avoid conflict with the preceding parables, two of which our Lord explained. If we are at liberty to take detached statements, here and there, in the word of God, and deal with them out of their connection, the Bible may be wrested to prove nearly anything which the prejudices or whims of men may desire. Now in the parable of the Sower, our Lord had unmasked the cunning and malice of Satan in catching away the word, and had shown that only a small proportion of the seed would be fruitful during the existence of the kingdom in mystery. In the parable of the Tares, He had spoken of the devil sowing darnel, as some render it, or as Greswell calls it, zizan, "a bastard, degenerate sort of wheat" which could not be distinguished from the true until the time of producing fruit, and continuing up to the harvest at the end of the age. In the parable of the Mustard Seed, He had unfolded the plots of the same malignant adversary to carry on his nefarious work of corruption and ruin in the branches of the great tree. Can it be that in the parable of the Leaven, the Saviour designed to teach a doctrine directly opposed to that which He had announced a moment before? Surely not. Whatever, therefore,

may be the proper exposition of the passage now before us, it must be made to harmonize with the truth previously taught.

In the fourth place, the figure which our Lord employs implies that which is sour and putrifying. Even the definitions of the word *leaven* given in our English Dictionaries do not sustain the common view of the parable, although the Lexicographers were of course familiar with the use of the word, constantly made by Expositors and Ministers of the gospel. Worcester says of leaven in its substantive form that it is "1. A substance which causes fermentation in that with which it is mixed;—particularly, yeast or sour dough"; and "2. Anything which mixes with a mass, and changes it to its own nature;—commonly used of something which depraves that with which it is mixed." The word in its verbal form he defines as meaning, "1. To induce fermentation in; 2. To imbue; to taint; to infect; to vitiate." With these definitions Webster agrees; and it is a singular fact that if our Lord, who always used words with divine accuracy, intended to represent something good, He deliberately employed a figure which in its very nature is the appropriate symbol of evil. Nor does the objection, often urged, possess any force, that according to this interpretation, He likens

the kingdom of heaven to that which is evil. The objection arises from a misconception of the kingdom of heaven as set forth in the parables. It is plainly not the same as the kingdom will be when the redeemed shall be gathered home; nor is it equivalent to the visible Church, because, in that case, all discipline would be forbidden, contrary to the instructions of our Lord and of the Holy Ghost elsewhere given. In the parable of the Tares and in other parables it is made apparent that a vast amount of evil will be found in the kingdom while it exists in mystery, and therefore, we need not be shocked to find it likened unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal.

In the fifth place, it is the uniform scriptural use of leaven to represent by it that which is evil, and not that which is good. In the Old Testament the words *leaven* and *leavened* occur twenty times; in the New Testament thirteen times; and they are invariably employed to denote the power or progress of corruption. It will scarcely be denied, therefore, that the natural and most obvious interpretation of the parable requires us to see in the leaven a symbol of error or of unrighteousness; and in favour of this explanation, Dr. J. A. Alexander says "is the very strong fact, that leaven always in the

Scriptures elsewhere (except Lev. xxiii: 17), is a figure of corruption, either in doctrine or affection. This usage, probably arising from the physical fact that fermentation is incipient putrefaction, may be traced in the exclusion of all leaven from the passover and other sacrificial rites of the Mosaic law, as well as in its figurative application both by Christ and Paul. The usage is indeed so uniform and easily accounted for from rational considerations, that nothing can outweigh it but the equally uniform judgment of interpreters and readers in all ages that this is an exception to the general rule, and that leaven, in this one place and its parallel, (Luke xiii: 21), denotes the spreading or diffusive quality of truth and of the true religion."

Whether the uniform judgment of uninspired interpreters and readers *ought* to outweigh the inspired testimony concerning the proper symbolical import of leaven, each must determine for himself; but at all events, the solitary exception to the scriptural usage of the word, mentioned by Dr. Alexander, turns out on a careful examination of the passage he cites, to be no exception whatever. Leaven was carefully excluded from all offerings under the law that typified Christ; and in the instance adduced it was required, because sin was in the worshipper's

nature, and God wished him to recognize this humiliating fact in drawing near to the Majesty on high. When, therefore, the Israelites were commanded to bring out of their habitations two wave loaves, baken with leaven, it was a significant and solemn proclamation of the truth, that in them, that is, in their flesh dwelt no good thing. As Macintosh well says upon the passage in Leviticus directing the offering of the leavened loaves, "Why was this? Because they were intended to foreshadow those who, though filled with the Holy Ghost, and adorned with His gifts and graces, had, nevertheless, *evil* dwelling in them. The Assembly, on the day of Pentecost, stood in the full value of the blood of Christ, was crowned with the gifts of the Holy Ghost; but there was leaven there also. No power of the Spirit could do away with the fact, that there was evil dwelling in the people of God. It might be suppressed and kept out of view; but it was there. This fact is foreshadowed in the type, by the leaven in the two loaves; and it is set forth in the actual history of the Church; for, albeit God the Holy Ghost was present in the assembly, the flesh was there likewise to lie unto Him. Flesh is flesh, nor can it ever be made aught else than flesh."

It is certain, therefore, that the disciples of our

Lord, long habituated, as Jews, to the use of leaven as the unvarying type of evil, would understand Him as referring to the spread of evil; and if they were in error in the conclusion they necessarily drew from His language, it is remarkable that He did not correct the mistake. Shortly after the parable was spoken, He told them to "take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," by which they were taught to beware "of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," (Matt. xvi: 6–12). On another occasion He said unto them first of all, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," (Luke xii: 7). Surely it will be admitted as an unquestionable principle of interpretation in reading God's word, that we must understand a metaphor which is not explained, in the light of the same metaphor *where it is explained;* and if so there is an end of the controversy concerning the meaning of leaven in the parable. Not only does it have a uniform sense in the Old Testament as the symbol of evil; but so it is employed by our Lord whenever he uses it as a figure; and so it is employed by the Holy Ghost, when He commands the Corinthians to cast out the incestuous person, and thus arrest the spread of evil practice, on the ground that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole

lump," (1 Cor. v : 6) ; and repeats the same words to the Galatians in reminding them of the rapid spread of false doctrine, (Gal. v : 9).

It only remains to add that, even if the common view of the parable is maintained in the face of Scripture, it does not prove the universal diffusion and triumph of Christianity ; for the woman hid, or covertly introduced, the leaven in three measures of meal, and *three* is never found in the Bible as the signature of the earth. It is a part taken from the whole, and probably that part in which the kingdom of heaven has specially manifested its rule, or in other words, what is popularly called Christendom. Alford, who, it is proper to say, is stoutly opposed to the interpretation here advocated, says the three measures constituted an ephah ; and hence the disciples would at once be reminded of the remarkable visions in Zechariah sweeping onward to the time when Christ shall be a priest upon His throne. In the last of these the prophet saw a woman sitting in an ephah, which is declared to be wickedness ; and she was held down by a weight of lead, fit symbol of God's heavy wrath against the leaven of wickedness, that shall gradually develope the Antichrist under the crushing burden of heartless profession and lifeless formalism. Thus the parable is brought

into strict harmony with the teachings of God's word everywhere, which declare that the present dispensation, like those that preceded it, shall close amid terrific judgments; that the mystery of iniquity already at work during the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles shall increase more and more until it shall gain unhindered sway; and that in the last days perilous times shall come, which will fully justify the sad question of our Lord, "When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?"

But knowing well how all this would discourage the hearts of His followers, after our Lord had sent the multitude away, and had entered into the house, He led the disciples to see that amid the growing evil, there would be a Church unspeakably precious in His sight. Accordingly He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in the field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." There is not the slightest allusion in these parables to the sinner seeking salvation, or seeking religion, as it is termed; for in that

case they would have been delivered in the presence of the multitude, whom they chiefly concerned; and as the Lord had plainly said a little while before, that "the field is the world," in no sense is salvation hid in the world; and in no sense does the sinner buy the world in order to be saved; and in no sense does the sinner sell all that he hath to purchase salvation, which is given without money and without price; and in no sense does the sinner hide salvation, but when it is obtained, he is commanded to let his light shine. Here, however, we have different aspects of the Church, under the figures of the treasure and the pearl of great price, hid it is true in the world, but so dear to the Saviour who is represented by the man finding the treasure, and the merchant man seeking goodly pearls, that He gave up, for a time, all He had with the Father, and gave Himself for her, and for her sake bought the field also, as the theatre on which He intends to display her beauty and loveliness, when associated with Him in the glory. While, therefore, appalling judgments are gathering like dark clouds over this evil age, the real Church is as safe as the eternal purpose, the omnipotent power, the unchangeable promise, and the infinite love of the living Christ can make her.

CHAPTER XVI.

NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

IT would be useless, perhaps, to prolong the discussion of the particular topic that has occupied the last few chapters. If the Scriptures already cited are not sufficient to convince the reader that the common expectation of a Christless Millennium is a dangerous delusion, it is probable that he would not be persuaded, though scores upon scores of additional passages were quoted, all equally positive in their character and equally explicit in their testimony, as to the continued and ever deepening ruin that must prevail on the earth until the personal advent of our Lord. It only remains, therefore, to glance at the general drift of both the Old and the New Testaments touching the course and termination of the present dispensation, and the mode by which the new and millennial dispensation is to be introduced.

Upon this point, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge in "The Knowledge of God Subjectively Considered" writes as follows: "As a question of mere doctrine, no reason can be assigned which

tends to limit the period of the struggle between good and evil in this world, or to determine any positive issue of it. It is only by express revelation we could know that the kingdom of God will triumph completely and possess the whole earth; and I have already said that the Scriptures seem to me to teach, that in order to this triumph that kingdom must assume a new form, and exist under a new dispensation. Whosoever will assert that the Church of God—independently of some divine change in the elements of the problem which it has been working out, under its gospel form, for more than eighteen centuries—can have a future very materially different from her past history; or that the human race can have a future spiritual history essentially variant from that which is past—without some further and marvellous interposition of God; will, in each instance as it appears to me, contradict the whole current of divine revelation, and disregard the absolute œconomy of the Plan of Salvation. The augmentation of the present saving operation of the divine Spirit—is not that supernatural change in the elements of the problem, is not that further interposition of God, which will extinguish sin and misery in this world, and give to the saints their Millennial glory and reign with Christ. It is the second

coming of the Son of Man, which is that change in the elements of the problem, that further interposition of God, which will give the victory,' (p. 677).

For the sake of convenience, let us divide the dispensations of Jehovah's dealings with man according to the view of Professor Bayne of McGill University, who calls the first, the Eden dispensation; the second, the Antediluvian dispensation; the third, the Patriarchal dispensation; the fourth, the Mosaic dispensation; the fifth, the Messianic dispensation; the sixth, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, or as it is some times termed, the dispensation of the Gospel; and the seventh, the Millennial dispensation. The first terminated with the fall of Adam carrying down with him all his posterity, and carrying them out with him also into a sin-cursed earth. The second terminated with the universal prevalence of wickedness that brought forth the waters of the deluge, and that led to the destruction of the entire race with the exception of Noah and his family. The third terminated with fearful judgments upon Egypt, and with the hurried flight of the despised Israelites, who escaped the judgments only because sheltered by the blood of their appointed substitute. The fourth terminated in the total apostasy of God's ancient

people, still clinging, it is true, to an empty form of godliness, but in reality an offensive carcass, fit only to be torn to pieces by the Roman eagles. The fifth terminated in the open rejection of Messiah, and in His brutal murder by execution upon the cross as a common malefactor.

Thus do we see that in each of the five preceding dispensations, man, tried under any and all circumstances, has proved to be a wretched failure; and each has closed amid increasing tokens of human depravity and divine wrath. Why will it not be so in the sixth dispensation? Most Christians will reply to this by saying that the present is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and therefore it dishonors Him to suppose that He will not gain a complete victory over evil by the agencies He now employs. But surely they forget that in an important sense all the preceding dispensations were no less truly dispensations of the Holy Ghost, than the one in which we live. There has never been a sinner regenerated and saved since Adam's day without the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, and yet this did not prevent failure, as we would judge, in each succeeding dispensation. It is clear, therefore, that we can not argue concerning the future, except upon the ground of what is plainly revealed. The question is not, what the Holy

Ghost *might* do, but what He *will* do; it is not what God *could* accomplish, if He chose to exert His Almighty power, but what He *intends* to accomplish in the performance of His own mysterious purpose, and in the demonstration of His own sovereign grace that will shine all the more brightly in contrast with man's deep-seated depravity.

In order to know His purpose and plan, we must turn to His blessed word, instead of following the counsel of our own hearts, or of human reason; and passing by much that might be gathered from the earlier portions of the Bible, and the Psalms, let us notice what is revealed in the prophecies upon the question now before us. Many of these prophecies that are commonly understood as referring to the Christian Church really allude, as a glance at the context will prove, to the literal Israël and Jerusalem; but even admitting that the Church is intended, there are two remarks to which attention is specially invited. The first is that not a single prophecy can be adduced which predicts the conversion of the world by the gradual diffusion of the gospel; and the second is that every prophecy which foretells millennial glory connects the close of the present system and the introduction of a better age with dreadful judgments. Those

who are determined not to be disturbed in long cherished opinions, received by tradition from their fathers, may dismiss this statement with a sneer; but all who truly desire to know the mind of the Spirit will at least give it a candid hearing.

In the first chapter of Isaiah we read, "Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed."

In the second chapter of Isaiah which tells us, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it," we also learn that "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation

shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. . . . And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Here the Lord is represented as arising to shake terribly the earth, when millennial peace and righteousness are introduced; and if this means that people will be gradually and quietly converted, we may give over all efforts to understand the language of the Bible.

In the third chapter of Isaiah the daughter of Zion is threatened with the deepest humiliation and severest punishment, and it is said to her, "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty men in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground." So great will be the slaughter of the men, that, as we learn from the fourth chapter which is immediately connected with the preceding words, "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped

of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."

In the eleventh chapter of Isaiah we have the beautiful prediction, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." But how is the description of this happy period introduced? By the solemn statement, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked"; nor is there a word either before or after the passage that hints

at the gradual and universal diffusion of the gospel.

At the close of the twenty-fourth, and in the twenty-fifth chapters of Isaiah, we have another beautiful prediction telling us that "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. . . . And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." But what brings about this blessed time? The increasing success of the gospel, until all men are converted? By no means, for immediately preceding the sweet promise of millennial rest it is said, "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the pit shall be taken in

the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth."

In the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah we are told of the time when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." But how is it brought about? "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: and his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. . . . And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation

of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones."

In the thirty-third chapter of Isaiah we have touching assurance of the safety of the redeemed in the millennial age. "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. . . . Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. . . . And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." But what follows in unbroken connection? "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain

also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood."

In the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah we are told, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." But it is also written, as indicating the mode by which the millennial bliss revealed in the chapter is attained, "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with recompense; he will come and save you."

In the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, we have a millennial scene when "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it

shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." But what ushers in the lovely scene? "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

In the sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah we have another glimpse of the Millennium, when "It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." But what precedes it in the relation of cause to effect, of means to a determined end? "Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger

with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many."

So much space has been occupied with quotations from Isaiah, that only a hurried reference can be made to the other prophets. Jeremiah is first directed to write, "I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."

Then in the thirtieth chapter he exclaims, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. . . . And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." But in what immediate connection does the restoration of Israel stand, and by what agencies is it accomplished? "Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until

he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it."

Ezekiel also, having predicted in the thirty-seventh chapter the full and final restoration of Israel, announces in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters that it will be attended by the display of Jehovah's wrath against the oppressor of His people, and by fearful judgments, "so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. . . . And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I

will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel." Then follows the description of a slaughter so terrible that the armor taken from the battle-field will supply fuel for seven years, and seven months will be employed by the house of Israel in burying the dead.

Daniel in the seventh chapter tells us he beheld, and the power symbolized by the little horn "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. . . . But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

In the third chapter of Joel we find a summons to the nations; "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be

wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." In immediate connection with this, and following the judgment of the assembled nations, is the promise of millennial peace and plenty, for "it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim."

In the ninth chapter of Amos it is written, "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the

the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us." But what follows the sifting and the sword? "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."

At the close of the third chapter of Micah the word is, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. But in the last days, it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of

the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off"; and then still further as indicating the judgment of many people, and the rebuke of strong nations afar off, it is said, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

In the third chapter of Zephaniah Jehovah says, "My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent"; thus directly connecting universal judgments with the introduction of millennial glory.

In the second chapter of Haggai He says, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake the nations, and the desire of all nations shall come"; and again, "I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of the kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen," or of the nations, as the word really means.

Zechariah contains many predictions of judgments growing darker and heavier, until we find in the thirteenth chapter, that two parts in all the land shall be cut off and die; while in the fourteenth chapter, we learn that the assembled nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle, and in the midst of sore distress and trouble, the Lord Himself shall come, and all the saints with Him.

In the third chapter of Malachi, it is said, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Then in the fourth chapter it is written, "Behold, the day

cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

Turning now to the New Testament, we are at once struck with the total absence of all reference to the triumph of the Church during the present dispensation. If the common doctrine is correct, that the agencies we see in use among us will result in "the universal reception of the true religion," it must be established by a process of human reasoning; for no intelligent person will affirm that it is distinctly proclaimed in the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. It may be *inferred* that when our Lord commanded the disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, and promised to be with them even unto the end of the world, and to send the Holy Spirit to abide with them forever, He intimated that His cause would win a complete victory on the earth, long before His second coming; and it may be strenuously *argued* that the pre-millennial view is Jewish in its origin, that it is carnal in its

character, that it disparages the gospel, and that it is open to a thousand objections; but after all, no one will assert that a single verse can be found, from the first of Matthew to the last of Revelation, which declares "unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ" previous to His personal advent at the end of this age.

Indeed just the reverse is shadowed forth, for everywhere the children of God are represented as comparatively few, separated from the world, hated by the world, exposed to persecution, sorrow, and manifold trials; nor is there a hint that this cross-bearing and pain will cease until our gathering together unto Jesus. For example, at the beginning of His teachings, the Beatitudes which certainly apply to the entire dispensation, are pronounced upon the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, those who are reviled, and against whom all manner of evil is said falsely for His sake. So He leads His disciples to expect opposition and violence, but bids them, if smitten on one cheek, to turn the other also, and if sued at law to take it patiently and quietly, returning love for hate, blessing for cursing, prayer for persecution; and closing the discourse with the solemn statement, "Many," not few, but "Many

will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," (Matt. vii: 22, 23).

Still later He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," (Matt. x: 34–39).

On another occasion He said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. . . . I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather

division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," (Luke xi: 49–53).

Again He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also," (John xv: 18–20). "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me [not in any thing or any one else] ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," (John xvi: 33). "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. . . . I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that

thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," (John xvii: 14–16).

Such is the direction of all our Lord's teachings, nor is there an intimation that the cross-bearing, and conflict, and persecution, and tribulation will cease up to the very close of the present age, when He will return to gather us unto Himself. If we who are His disciples were more faithful to Him we would know better in our own experience the meaning and truth of His statements, when He declares that the world will hate us; and if the world no longer hates us, it does not prove that the character of the world has changed, or that the mind of the flesh is no longer enmity against God, but only that we have departed from the doctrine and example of Christ, and are conformed to the world. Let a Christian now determine, as Paul did, not to know any thing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, walking in simple obedience to the word, with his eye singly fixed upon the risen Lord, in separation from the aims, customs, opinions of society, refusing to substitute human authority or ecclesiastical ordinances in place of the Saviour's finished work, and he will soon discover that the offense of the cross has not yet ceased. Let a Christian now,

especially a Christian minister, utter his earnest protest against the intense worldliness that prevails in the Church, not sparing the rich and fashionable, and let him rebuke the spirit of sectarianism that rules in his own denomination, and let him proclaim, as the Bible does, the utter ruin of human nature and the absolute need of the regenerating and sovereign power of the Holy Ghost, and let him preach, not the flimsy and maudlin stuff called the "gospel of manhood," but the gospel of the Son of God, and he will speedily find himself pursuing a lonely path, so narrow that there will probably be room for only one other, and that One an invisible friend. The real followers of the Lamb have always been a "little flock," nor does our Lord even hint that they will ever be a large flock until He shall come.

Glancing in the last place at the testimony of the Spirit through the Apostles, we find them "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," (Acts xiv: 22). Was it true only then that believers must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom? Let the history of the Church for eighteen hundred years answer the question. But if true then, and true

since, and true still, there is no reason to say that it will be otherwise in the future, unless some clear, explicit statement of Scripture can be adduced for the assertion, and no such statement can be furnished. But if it will remain true to the close of the dispensation, that through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom, millennial joy can not be the portion of the saints till Christ comes.

In the chapter following the testimony concerning the necessity of tribulation as belonging to entrance into the kingdom, we are told that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name," (Acts xv: 14). It is not said that God did visit the Gentiles to make all, or nearly all of them His people, but to take out of them a people for His name. In other words the gospel age is no less marked by election, sovereign, eternal election, than the preceding age under the law. In *that* a single nation was chosen from all other nations to be God's witnesses on the earth; in *this* the choice extends to some, not all of the Gentiles, and none of them can come to Christ, except the Father who sent Him draw them. Here, too, the facts agree with the doctrine, for a very small proportion of the Gentiles during the Gospel dispensation have received salvation; and if any are disposed

to wonder and cavil at what all are compelled to admit, a good answer may be found in the language of Augustine who exclaimed, when brought face to face with the profound truth of foreordination, "Oh, the depth! oh, the depth!" or a still better answer may be found in the language of the Holy Ghost who illustrates this truth by the case of Esau and Jacob, when "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth," it was said to the mother, "the elder shall serve the younger," and then meets the objection of partiality or unfairness with this pointed and searching question, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Rom. ix). Men may quarrel with the doctrine of election, but they can not deny the fact that it has pleased God, during these past eighteen centuries, to bring comparatively a small number to the saving knowledge of the truth; and if there is a word of promise that it will be otherwise until the end, let the word be presented.

In connection with this the Gentiles are reminded that they have no cause of boasting because Israel had been rejected, and the branches broken off, that they themselves might be graffed in. "Well," says the Spirit, "because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off," (Rom. xi: 20–22). In view of this solemn passage it is, of course, a question of deep interest whether the Gentile Church has continued in His goodness, and of this every intelligent observer must judge for himself. While gladly and gratefully acknowledging the reality of much that passes under the name of Christian, and the presence of a vast amount of good wrought by grace, he will also be compelled to acknowledge that brotherly love has almost disappeared, that a cruel bigotry has rent the visible unity of the people of God, that separation from the world is no longer characteristic of the immense majority who profess to be crucified unto the world, that infidelity has not only invaded the pew but the

pulpit, or rather descended from the pulpit where it is proclaiming its impious denials of divine truth to find ready acceptance in the pew, that lifeless formality abounds, that baptism, or the Church, or some outward observance is exalted to the place of the one atoning sacrifice upon the cross, and that human machinery in carrying on the work of the Lord has superseded to a fearful extent the power of the Holy Ghost. The reply that it has always been so is very far from proving that there will be a Millennium before Christ comes, and surely, whatever may have been true in the past, the professing body of the present day, instead of rejoicing that it is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing, would be wise to see that it is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, fit only to be spued out of the mouth of our insulted Lord; and instead of claiming that it is about to convert the world, it would be wise to fear lest God is about to cut it off, as He did apostate Israel.

Looking a little further, the Holy Ghost tells us in Romans, that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," (Rom. viii: 17). In writing to the Corinthians He says, "If in this life only we have hope in

Christ, we are of all men most miserable," (1 Cor. xv: 19); "for we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life," (2 Cor. v: 4). In writing to the Galatians He says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye can not [or may not] do the things that ye would," (Gal. v: 19). In writing to the Ephesians He says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," (Eph. vi: 11, 12). In writing to the Philippians He says, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," (Phil. i: 29). In writing to the Colossians He says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry," (Col. iii: 5). In writing to the Thessalonians He says, "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with

his mighty angels," (2 Thess. i: 7). In writing to Timothy He says, "If we suffer, we also shall reign with him," (2 Tim. ii: 12). In writing to the Hebrews He says, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," (Heb. iv: 1); for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise," (Heb. x: 36). In writing by James He says, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v: 8). In writing by Peter He says, "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," (1 Pet. v: 10). In writing by John He says, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" [or the wicked one], while the whole book of Revelation down to the manifestation of Jesus Christ is crowded with the symbols of sorrows and trials and dreadful judgments.

Thus the teachings of the New Testament everywhere imply the existence of evil within and around us, and sore conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil; nor is there a line intimating the cessation of the conflict according to the teachings of the Old Testament millennial

scriptures, where it is written, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," (Isa. xi: 9); "but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid," (Mic. iv: 4). If, therefore, these Old Testament predictions of rest must be fulfilled, and these New Testament predictions of sorrow and suffering as the portion of Christ's disciples during the present dispensation must also be fulfilled, it is obvious that millennial blessedness can not be our lot before His coming. It is true that many ignorant Christians have been led to give up a large part, and some the larger part, of the New Testament, on the foolish supposition that it was designed only for the times of the Apostles; forgetting that the Apostles had nothing more to do in preparing the New Testament than the pen of the writer has to do in giving us the production of the author's brain, and that this God-inspired book is intended for all times. But alas! the denial of our Lord's premillennial advent has driven many to a denial of the inspiration of His word. They agree with Prof. Fisher in his recent work on the "Beginnings of Christianity," in which he admits that the Apostles expected the return of Christ, and then affirms that they were in error. He says their teachings on this subject were biased by their mistaken

expectations; and if this is believed, infidelity must follow. It is sad to see the professed friends of our Saviour going over to the ranks of the enemy; but their example is not more dangerous than is the common habit of referring the constant allusions to the coming of Christ that are found in the New Testament only to the wants of the first disciples.

In like manner, all the testimony which has been quoted to prove that the disciples of Jesus must expect hatred and suffering and persecution, and therefore that they need not expect millennial rest and glory and victory until Christ comes, will be quietly set aside as having reference merely to the early days of the Church. Many ministers will say, and do say, that if they did not believe they will succeed in converting men, and if they did not believe that their fellow-ministers and their successors will succeed in converting the world, they would never preach again; thereby showing that they ought not to preach at all; for if success is the measure of their duty, the sooner they retire into silence, the better it will be, probably, for the truth. So far from universal success following the efforts of God's servants, the New Testament is clear in asserting that in the *last days* perilous times shall come, that evil men and seducers shall wax

worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, until the boasted progress of the race shall head up in the Antichrist, and all the world shall wonder after the beast. It seems to have been the purpose of the Holy Ghost in the second Epistles to apply the truth taught in the first Epistles with special reference to these last days; and it is remarkable that in all of them the saints are put on their guard against false teachers. All believers, therefore, are under responsibility to test every doctrine by the written WORD, and although the men and women who preach may appear to be very devout, and may use the most splendid diction adorned with the most impressive elocution, we dare not bid them God-speed unless they bring the doctrine of Christ, and are in obedience to His revealed will. If that word alone is left to form our opinions, apart from the influence of early training, and the control of human authority, it is not rash, perhaps, to say that we will begin to "watch" for our Lord, "looking for that blessed hope," with the profound conviction that there can be NO MILLENNIUM TILL CHRIST COMES.

CHAPTER XVII.

HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE.

WITHOUT attaching undue importance to the opinions of men in relation to the subject before us, it may be well to show that the premillennial advent is not novel, as many ignorantly assert, but that it was almost universally held in the earliest days of the Church. Nor can it excite surprise to learn that the first disciples clung to it amid their manifold temptations, before the echo of their Saviour's solemn and tender admonitions had died away in the din of the world, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," (Matt. xxiv: 42); "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," (Mark xiii: 37). They knew, as all can see at a glance, that a state of watching is utterly incompatible with the idea of a long period intervening previous to His return, for the moment a space of a thousand years is put between Christians and Christ's coming, it is a contradiction in terms to say that they watch for it. They may believe it, they may desire it, but

it is worse than foolish, for it is false, to say that they *watch* for it. Hence to all except those who regard it as possible every day, as not improbable any day, the frequent commands of our Lord to watch for it, and the numerous allusions to it as a mighty motive by the Holy Ghost, drop completely out of the faith of God's people, unless by a gross perversion of Scripture they substitute in its stead the horrible thought of death.

According to the view now commonly entertained, the universal reception of the true religion must precede the advent of Christ, and therefore it is considered a dangerous delusion and hurtful fanaticism to look for Him before the accomplishment of this great work. That this view is a departure from the standard of orthodoxy revealed in the Scriptures has been abundantly proved; that it is a departure from the standard of orthodoxy usually so much respected by all who may be called churchmen in the various denominations remains to be shown. Reference has previously been made to the late Dr. John Lillie, of whom, in a touching biographical notice, prefixed to Lange's Commentary on Thessalonians, and written at the request of Dr. Schaff by the beloved James Inglis who has since followed his friend to be with Christ, it is said, "Professor Pillans in his old age stated to me

that John Lillie was the most accomplished scholar of all the pupils who had passed from his care in a professional career, which, at Eton and Edinburgh, extended over more than half a century. Probably any member of the Faculty of Letters in the University of Edinburgh at that day, would have endorsed this testimony. His attainments at the age of twenty-one, were not those of a precociously brilliant or a merely studious youth, but rather those of a vigorous and cultivated mind in its maturity. When from this distance of time I recall them, they seem more wonderful to me now than they did then." He may be accepted, therefore, as a competent witness upon any point that requires to be established by learning.

In a sermon preached before the Synod of New York in 1865, and published at the solicitation of several of the ministers who heard it, he affirms of the opinion now generally held that the world must be converted before Christ's coming, "It must needs be confessed that this view, common as it is, and however great a favourite on the missionary platform, is at any rate of recent origin. It is very questionable whether, even so late as two hundred years ago, it had yet been heard of amongst good men. Not a trace of it is to be found in the Standards of Westminster,

or in the Confessions and other remains of the Reformation period, and quite as little in the writings of the Fathers. It can not, therefore, allege the authority of antiquity in its behalf. On the contrary, nothing could be easier than to adduce from the records of those past times any required amount of repugnant and irreconcilable statement."

In a note upon this passage he adds, "It is well known, that in the early part of the last century the able and learned Dr. Whitby, 'conceiving this glorious conversion [of the Jews] . . . might be the very resurrection intended by St. John, (Rev. xx: 4), and the flourishing condition and union both of the Jewish and Gentile Church thus raised from the dead, and so continuing in peace and plenty, and a great increase of knowledge and righteousness, and a return of the primitive purity of doctrine and manners, might be the reign of the saints on earth a thousand years,' expressly speaks of '*this*' as a '*new hypothesis*,' and wrote his famous *Treatise on the Millennium* for its illustration and defence. Certainly, few men of Whitby's day were better acquainted than he with whatever had been previously written on the subject; and in our own time the late Edward Bickersteth, whose name is still fragrant and venerable in the

churches has testified that he himself was unable to trace the '*new hypothesis*' any further."

The late Bishop Henshaw of Rhode Island, of whom it is said in the Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, that he "was a man of clear, sound and vigorous intellect," states in "An Inquiry Concerning the Second Advent," that "The commonly received opinion of a Spiritual Millennium, consisting in a universal triumph of the Gospel, and the conversion of all nations, for a thousand years before the coming of Christ, is a novel doctrine, unknown to the Church for the space of sixteen hundred years. So far as we have been able to investigate its history, it was first advanced by Rev. Dr. Whitby, the Commentator."

It becomes, therefore, a question of interest to know something about this Rev. Dr. Whitby, whose ability and influence turned the belief of God's people from the channel in which it had been running for sixteen hundred years, not only into another but a directly opposite channel, leading their thoughts away from the long cherished hope of Christ's coming as the end of their toils, to excite within them expectations of the triumph of the Church and the improvement of the race. In the New American Cyclopædia it is said, "In 1710 he published two other works

in illustration and defence of Arminianism, 'Concerning the True Import of the Words Election and Reprobation,' often reprinted as 'Whitby on the Five Points,' and 'Four Discourses.' His views gradually diverged still further from the Calvinism in which he had been bred and educated, and under the influence of Dr. Clarke, he became a convert to Arianism. . . . That he always cherished his Arian principles appears from his 'Last Thoughts,' published posthumously with a biography by Dr. Sykes." The Religious Encyclopædia says, "In his latter days he became an Arian."

Such was the father of the modern doctrine which teaches us to look for the conversion of the world, instead of looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Are its advocates, especially the Calvinists by whom it is now so generally received, proud of its parentage? Is it not humiliating to find them the obedient followers of such a man, and at his command diluting their strong theology with the weak delusion that now everywhere prevails about the progress of the Church and of the age? Of course we are not astonished to see an Arian or a Unitarian upholding any humanitarian movement, or scientific invention, however flatly it may contradict the word of God; but it is both

surprising and painful to witness the zeal with which those, who profess entire subjection to the authority of that word, defend the "new hypothesis" of one who denied their Lord. Truth fallen in the streets, however, is one of the signs of the times, and the mass of Christians care no longer for the grand old doctrines once spread before the world on the banners of the Reformation. They plume themselves on having outgrown the swaddling bands of these early Confessions, not reflecting that in like manner the Roman empire, tottering to its downfall in its luxury and effeminacy, had outgrown the stern virtues and indomitable courage of the Republic.

But long before the Reformation, it can be shown, if anything is proved by human testimony, that the theory of the Arian Whitby and his numerous disciples of the present day, was utterly unknown to those who are called the Fathers; and on the other hand that the views of the pre-millennialists held nearly undisputed sway for the first three hundred years of the Christian era. Neander says in his History of the Christian Religion and Church, "The Christians were certainly convinced, that the Church would come forth triumphant out of its conflicts, and, as it was its destination to be a world-transforming principle, would attain to the

dominion of the world; but they were far from understanding at first the prophetic words of Christ intimating how the Church, in its gradual evolutions, under natural conditions, was to be a salt and a leaven for all human relations. They could at first, as we have before remarked, conceive of it no otherwise than this, that the struggle between the Church and the pagan state would endure till the triumph brought about from without, *by the return of Christ to judgment.* Now it was here that many seized hold of an image which had passed over to them from the Jews, and which seemed to adapt itself to their own present situation,—*the idea of a millennial reign*, which the Messiah was to set up on earth, at the end of the whole earthly course of the world, where all the righteous of all times should live together in holy communion. As the world had been created in six days, and, according to Psalm xc: 4, a thousand years in the sight of God is as one day, so the world was to continue in its hitherto condition for six thousand years, and end with a thousand years of blessed rest corresponding to the Sabbath," (Vol. I, p. 650).

Mosheim in his Church History, although opposed, like Neander, to the view advocated in these pages, is still more explicit, and says in

speaking of the doctrine of the Church in the third century, "The most famous controversies that divided the Christians during this century were those concerning the *Millennium*, or reign of a thousand years; the baptism of heretics, and the doctrine of Origen. Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed, that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution of this world. *This opinion, which had hitherto met with no opposition* [observe, it had hitherto met with no opposition], was variously interpreted by different persons: nor did all promise themselves the same kind of enjoyments in that future and glorious kingdom. But in this century, its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favorite sentiments. Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, endeavored to restore this opinion to its former credit, in a book written against the *Allegorists*, for so he called, by way of contempt, the adversaries of the Millennarian system. This work, and the hypothesis it defended, were exceedingly well received by great numbers in the canton of Arsinoe; and among others by Coracion, a presbyter of no mean influence and reputation. But Dyonisius of Alexandria, a

disciple of Origen, stopped the growing progress of this doctrine by his private discourse, and also by two learned and judicious dissertations concerning the divine promises," (Vol. I, p. 89).

Dr. Schaff, whose History of the Christian Church has received the warmest commendations of the leading theological journals, says, "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ancient Church is the widely current and very prominent chiliasm, or the doctrine of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years. The Jewish hope of a Messianic kingdom, which rested on carnal misapprehension of the prophetic figures, was transplanted to the soil of Christianity, but here spiritualized, and fixed on the second coming of Christ instead of the first; and this earthly Sabbath of the Church was no longer regarded as the goal of her course, but only as the prelude to the endless blessedness of heaven. The Christian Chiliasm, if we leave out of sight the sensuous and fanatical extravagance into which it has frequently run, both in ancient and modern times, is based on the unfulfilled promises of the Lord, and particularly on the apocalyptic figure of his thousand years' reign upon earth after the first resurrection; in connection with the numerous passages respecting his glorious return, which

declare it to be near, and yet uncertain and unascertainable as to its day and hour, that believers may be always ready for it. This precious hope, through the whole age of persecution, was a copious fountain of encouragement and comfort under the pains of that martyrdom which sowed in blood the seed of a glorious harvest for the Church."

Then, after referring to Barnabas, Papias, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and others, as teaching that Christ will come at the beginning of the Millennium, he adds the following significant statement: "In the age of Constantine, however, a radical change took place in this belief. After Christianity, contrary to all expectation, triumphed in the Roman empire, and was embraced by the Cæsars themselves, the millennial reign, instead of being anxiously waited and prayed for, began to be dated either from the first appearance of Christ, or from the conversion of Constantine, and to be regarded as realized in the glory of the dominant imperial State-church," (Vol. I, pp. 299–301).

In Hagenbach's History of Doctrines it is said, "The disciples of Christ having received from their Master the promise of his second coming (parousia), the first Christians looked upon this event as near at hand, in connection with the

general resurrection of the dead and the final judgment." After placing in a foot-note the striking statement from Dorner, "the Christian hope in the Christ that was to come grew out of faith in the Christ who had already come," he adds, "Justin, writing at the time of Papias, says that it was the general faith *of all orthodox* Christians; and that only the Gnostics did not share in it. Still further, he quotes the following remarkable admission from Giesler's Church History, the italics being his own: "*In all the works of this period* (*the first two centuries*), *millennarianism is so prominent, we can not hesitate to consider it as universal in an age, when such sensuous motives were certainly not unnecessary to animate men to suffer for Christianity*," (Vol. I, p. 215).

The celebrated Chillingworth says, in an argument against the Infallibility of the Roman Church, "The doctrine of the millennarians was, 'That before the world's end Christ should reign upon earth for a thousand years, and that the saints should live under him in all holiness and happiness.' That the doctrine is by the present Roman Church held false and heretical, I think no man will deny. That the same doctrine was by the Church of the next age after the Apostles held true and catholic, I prove by these two

reasons. The first reason: Whatsoever doctrine is believed and taught by the most Fathers of any age of the Church, and by none of their contemporaries opposed and condemned, that is to be esteemed the catholic doctrine of those times; but the doctrine of the millennaries was believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of the age next after the Apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned; therefore, it was the catholic doctrine of the Church of those times." Further, in quoting these Fathers, he says, "That Irenæus grounded it upon evident Scripture, and professes that he learnt it (whether mediately, or immediately I can not tell) from presbyters who saw John the Lord's disciple, and heard of him what our Lord taught of those times (of the thousand years); and also, as he says after, from Papias, the auditor of John the chamber-fellow of Polycarpus, an ancient man, who recorded it in writing. . . . Lastly, that Justin Martyr grounds it upon plain prophecies of the Old Testament, and express words of the New. He professeth, That he, and all other Christians, of a right belief in all things, believe it," (Vol. III, p. 369).

The testimony of Gibbon is worthy of special attention, for although he cared nothing about the Millennium, nor for the divine book which

teaches it, yet in preparing materials for his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, he was obliged to become familiar with the writings of the Fathers. "The ancient Christians," he says, "were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages can not give us any adequate notion. In the primitive Church, the influence of truth was very powerfully strengthened by an opinion, which, however it may deserve respect for its usefulness and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. *It was universally believed*, that the end of the world, and the kingdom of heaven, were at hand. . . . The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy it was inferred, that this long period of labor and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped

death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection. . . . . The assurance of such a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the Apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine," (Vol. I, pp. 532–534).

The next witness is the Arian Whitby himself, the author of the "new hypothesis" now so commonly received in the Christian Church. In his "Treatise on Tradition," as quoted in the London Quarterly Review and elsewhere, he says, "The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of saints for a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; and yet it passed among the best Christians for two hundred and fifty years for a tradition apostolical; and as such is delivered by many fathers of the second and third centuries, who spake of it as the tradition of our Lord and His Apostles, and of all the ancients that lived before them; who tell us the very words in which it was delivered, the Scriptures, which were then so interpreted, and say that it was held by all Christians who were exactly orthodox. . . . It was received not only in the eastern parts of

the Church by Papias (in Phrygia), Justin (in Palestine), but by Irenæus (in Gaul), Nepos (in Egypt), Apollinarius, Methodius (in the west and south), Cyprian, Victorinus (in Germany), by Tertullian (in Africa), Lactantius (in Italy) and Severus, and by the Council of Nice."

Perhaps it is going too far to say that the Council of Nice formally proclaimed the doctrine of the Millennium as now believed substantially by pre-millennialists, for the subject was not fairly before them. But what is equally to the purpose, they found it everywhere existing, and they did not condemn it, nor did they utter a word that looked toward the support of the modern theory, while all that was said, having even a remote reference to the topic, showed that their faith and hope reached onward to the appearing and kingdom of Christ at His advent, as the object of their longing expectation, according to the views of those who had preceded them. The learned Greswell, in his first volume on the Parables, quotes a number of Fathers favoring the pre-millennial view, who lived from the days of the Apostles down to the very time of the Council of Nice, A. D. 325, and as the Council suppressed the Arian heresy, and settled other disputed questions that had agitated the

bosom of the Church, it is certain that they would have borne testimony against this view, if it had not commanded their cordial assent. Dr. Stanley, in his entertaining History of the Eastern Church, says, "Alone of all the Councils it still retains a hold on the mass of Christendom. Its creed, as we just now saw, is the only creed accepted throughout the universal Church. The Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed have never been incorporated into the ritual of the Greek Church. But the Nicene Creed, Greek and Eastern though it be, has a place in the liturgies and confessions of all Western Churches, at least down to the end of the sixteenth century," (p. 150).

It is, therefore, a most interesting and suggestive fact that this important Council, knowing that a belief in the personal coming of Christ to establish His kingdom and to reign with His saints a thousand years was everywhere embraced, not only abstained from uttering a word of protest against it, but so far as they spoke at all, bore their testimony in the same direction. As Whitby says, "It was held by all Christians who were exactly orthodox." Or as Gibbon says, "It appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers." Or as Bishop Russell says, "So far as we view the question

in reference to the sure and certain hope entertained by the Christian world that the Redeemer would appear on earth, and exercise authority during a thousand years, there is good ground for the assertion of Mede, Dodwell, Burnet, and writers on the same side, that down to the beginning of the fourth century the belief was universal and undisputed," (Discourse on the Millennium, p. 236).

Yet in the face of all this, Professor Shedd, who writes pleasantly and is no doubt worthy of the high esteem in which he is held, has ventured to affirm in his History of Christian Doctrine that "Millennarianism was not the received and authoritative faith of the Church." Even he, however, admits that "The period between the years 150 and 250 is the blooming age of millennarianism"; and that "of the apostolical fathers, Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias exhibit in their writings distinct traces of this doctrine"; Barnabas, let it be remembered, being the companion of St. Paul, while Hermas, it is generally allowed, is the same person saluted in Romans xvi: 4, and of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, Irenæus, according to Eusebius, asserts that he was the disciple and pupil of St. John, and the companion of Polycarp. Dr. Lillie, in an appendix to the sermon already quoted, refers

to the sweeping statement of Professor Shedd in what he calls "the singularly inadequate and, I say it reluctantly, somewhat unfair chapter on millennarianism. 'There are no traces of Chiliasm,' he says, 'in the writings' of certain Fathers whom he names, and then, with rather hasty logic, he 'infers that this tenet was not the received faith of the Church, certainly down to the year 150.' It would have been more to the purpose, could he have pointed out any traces of *opposition* to Chiliasm in the writings either of those particular Fathers, or of any others within that period. For it seems to be conceded that *every one of the Apostolical Fathers, who says anything at all on the subject, is a Chiliast.* And that all the rest were not less so, would be no very violent inference from the fact, recognized by Dr. Shedd himself, that 'so general had the tenet become in the last half of the second century, that Justin Martyr declares that it was the belief of all but the Gnostics.'"

Of course it is not pretended that the prevalence of pre-millennial views during the first three centuries proves these views to be correct, for some of the "Fathers" taught very serious error; and no intelligent Christian needs to be informed that "All Synods or Councils since the Apostles'

times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both." It has been abundantly shown, however, that in an age, beyond question the best, the purest, and the most successful the Church has ever known, the doctrine of our Lord's personal advent to establish His kingdom, and to reign with His saints a thousand years on the earth, was generally if not universally held. It has been said that this was owing to the terrible persecutions which burst like successive storms upon Christians during that period; but at all events it must be admitted that the doctrine comforted their hearts, and that it did not arrest their earnest efforts to save souls, for at no other time has there been manifested a more zealous missionary spirit, nor a more intense desire attested in self-denying labors for the speedy accomplishment of the number of God's elect.

On the other hand, when the Emperor Constantine took the Church under his protection and patronage, allying it with the world, and making it the instrument to attain worldly ends, the hope of the Lord's coming gradually died out of the hearts of His people, and with the exception of a few scattered witnesses for the truth, we hear nothing more of it until the time

of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. In proportion as this hope was lost, it seems that gnorance, like gloomiest night, settled down upon Christendom, and innumerable errors prowled through the darkness, threatening the utter extinction of the gospel. The millennial reign was "regarded as realized in the glory of the dominant imperial State-church," as Dr. Schaff says, and the mind being taken from Christ to look for the triumph of His cause through human agencies, the inevitable consequence was the cessation of conscious dependence upon Him alone, followed by self-confidence and the introduction of unscriptural doctrines and methods to achieve the anticipated success.

But when it pleased God to break the slumber of centuries, and to raise up men who preached the forgotten truth of a present justification and of an assured hope only by faith in the precious blood of Christ alone, the expectation of our Lord's speedy appearing again took its appropriate place in the faith of believers. Page after page might be filled with extracts from the writings of Luther, Calvin, Knox, and others who were forced by the Holy Ghost to the forefront of the battle, showing how clearly they saw, and how eagerly they embraced the doctrine of Christ's personal coming, and not "the universal

reception of the true religion," as the proper object of believing contemplation. They had grace given them to bear testimony against the fanaticism of some who believed in a gross and sensual millennium, "but," as Dr. Lillie says, "that they did, at the same time, generally and steadfastly hold to the ideas of a restored Israel, and a renewed earth, and, in particular, that not one of them ever allowed the modern notion of an intervening millennium to becloud his solemn, earnest outlook for the Lord's Second Coming—so much is perfectly well known to all who have a moderate acquaintance with their writings."

Accordingly we search in vain among the Confessions of that period for any trace of the modern theory which diverts the mind of the bride from a patient watching for the Bridegroom into the dangerous delusion, so dishonoring to Him, of expecting her own triumph and reign without His personal presence. Let us take, for example, the Westminster Confession of Faith, which will stand forever among the noblest productions of uninspired men, and among the clearest testimonies to the truth. The twenty-fifth chapter is entitled Of The Church, defining its nature and purpose; and if the framers of this remarkable Confession had held the modern and common theory, it is certain they would have

furnished us with glowing statements of "the universal diffusion of revealed truth," and "unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ," long before His appearing. But all that is said touching the future is in the fifth section, as follows: "The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error: and some have so degenerated, as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth, to worship God according to His will." If the Assembly who formed the Confession had maintained the view now taught in Presbyterian pulpits, and papers, and Seminaries, it is unaccountable that they gave not the slightest hint of it, and made not the most distant allusion to it, in a chapter treating directly and solely of the Church.

But in the thirty-third chapter we find language which no human ingenuity can render consistent with the belief that a thousand years of millennial righteousness and peace must be expected previous to the coming of our Lord. "As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful,

because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." Such are the closing words of the Confession of Faith; and it is difficult to see how any can intelligently accept them as true, and at the same time adopt the theory of Whitby as to the long impersonal reign of holiness on the earth before the end of the dispensation. It will not be denied that the reference is to the personal coming of Christ, and it is impossible for men to be "*always* watchful" for it, if they are convinced that His coming will be deferred for at least a thousand years; and it is impossible for them to assert in one breath that "they know not at what hour the Lord will come," and in the next breath that He will not come for at least a thousand years; and it is impossible for them to "be *ever* prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come *quickly*," if they believe that He will not come quickly, but that He will postpone His coming until at least a thousand years shall have run their round.

So far, then, as the Westminster Confession of Faith speaks at all upon the subject, it must be admitted that it speaks on the side of the general view advocated in these pages, and none will pretend that it speaks anywhere on the other side. Nor are we surprised at this fact when we

learn that Principal Bailie wrote as follows of the Confession and its authors: "I marvel I can find nothing in it against the millenaries. I can not think the author [Forbes] a millenary. I can not dream why he should have omitted an error so famous in antiquity, and so troublesome among us; for *the most of the chief divines here* [Westminster], not only Independents, but others, such as Twisse [the Prolocutor, or Moderator], Marshall, Palmer, and *many more* are *express Chiliasts*." If, therefore, any who hold to the Westminster Confession of Faith are charged with unsoundness in doctrine, because they believe and teach the personal coming of the Lord to reign with the risen and raptured saints on the earth for a thousand years, and this as possible at any moment, they may be content to take their place with the Moderator and "most of the chief divines" who compiled that admirable statement and summary of Christian truth.

Since the days of the Reformation the doctrine of the pre-millennial advent has been subject to the fluctuations which have so strangely marked the ebb and flow of vital piety in all the history of the past. It is not, however, going too far to say, that the doctrine sinks out of view in proportion as the Church descends into a low

spiritual state; and that it rises into view in proportion as the Holy Ghost lifts His people into a higher spiritual existence. In those dark periods when formalism, rationalism, and worldliness abound, giving tone to the speech and conduct of men who have a name to live and are dead, we find no mention of our Lord's second coming; but in the revival of God's work this truth is also revived, commanding the faith, energizing the efforts, and kindling the aspirations of believers who look for Him to appear a second time without sin unto salvation. A long list of names might be presented of those who advocate the pre-millennial doctrine, embracing many to whom would be conceded in the judgment of the Christian world the very front rank as ministers of the Gospel, Commentators, and Authors, and particularly distinguished for their evangelical views. It is true that in America the number is not very great, and some of these have brought reproach upon the truth by the monstrous heresy of the annihilation of the wicked, but in Europe, and especially on the Continent, the vast majority of real Christians are confidently expecting the personal coming of the Lord to establish His kingdom and to reign with the saints a thousand years before the end.

For example, the last article of the Confession of Faith, or Declaration of Principles, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly of the Free Italian Church, at Milan, in June, 1870, is as follows: "The Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven and transform our body of humiliation into a glorious body. In that day the dead in Christ shall rise first, and the living who are found faithful shall be transformed, and thus together shall we be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, to be forever with the Lord; *and after His kingdom, all the rest shall rise to be judged in judgment.*" It is a cause of gratitude to discover this little body, but recently entering into the light, so clearly perceiving that there is no judgment for the believer as to the question of sin and salvation, because judgment has been pronounced and executed upon the person of Jesus Christ, and that the proper hope of the Church is the personal coming of her Lord to receive her to Himself in the glory, long before the resurrection and judgment of unbelievers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

POWER OF THE DOCTRINE.

THE prominence of the position assigned to the doctrine of our Lord's second coming in the Sacred Scriptures at once establishes its practical value. One verse in thirty of the New Testament, let it be remembered, points with eager gesture to His promised and expected return as the radiant object of Christian hope. As previously shown, it is constantly held forth to arm the believer for the conflicts of life, to strengthen him for its toils, to cheer him in its trials, and to comfort him amid its sorrows. It forms the foundation of the most solemn warnings, it gives point to the most earnest exhortations, and it is interwoven with the most tender encouragements addressed to us in the word of God. If we tear it away from that word by the rude hand of a violent criticism, it is like despoiling a beautiful edifice of all its adornments, and making it rather a silent memorial of the past than a furnished habitation for the future. If we even forget that it is in the word, and that it is there

to attract our daily contemplation, we lose much of the joy which our Father has provided for His children while tarrying in the earthly house of this tabernacle; and we are sure to have our attention called to passing scenes and worldly prospects, that are unsuited to our peculiar character as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

"The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," who has made such ample provision, not only for our present and assured salvation through the perfect and finished work of His dear Son, but for our constant refreshment by the way, knows what is best adapted to our wants along the journey; and those who have carefully read what goes before, and who maintain a posture of humble and intelligent subjection to His revealed will, can not doubt that the truth to which He continually directs our thoughts in the future is the second coming of our Saviour. This truth, however, may be perceived distantly and intellectually, as Lord Bolingbroke is said to have seen, in the darkness of his infidelity, certain doctrines clearly stated in the Bible, when he gallantly offered the services of his pen to Lady Huntingdon in defence of her assailed system of faith; and we must remember that there is an immense difference between believing

with the mind and believing with the heart. Perhaps by none has "that blessed hope" been more obscured than by those who have recognized it as taught in the Bible, but have failed to receive its transforming power into their own souls. They have made it the starting-place for wild speculations, and have succeeded too often in diverting the gaze of the believer from the coming of the Lord to signs and wonders that have invariably disappointed the expectations of their dupes. It is impossible to sum up the manifold evils that have resulted from the dangerous artifice of Satan in turning so many of God's people from the sober and sound exposition of prophecy, to loose predictions that have no other basis than the vagaries of a distempered imagination.

It should be enough to excite the suspicion of Christians who are walking in the light, to discover that the views of many writers on the second advent call them away from the calm and joyful consideration of the person and work of their Lord to the decrees of emperors, the decisions of cabinets, the discoveries of science, the exploits of warriors, and the vicissitudes of nations. That surely is a hazardous theory which projects anything, even to the thickness of the thinnest tissue-paper, between the soul and the Saviour; and precisely the same objection which

can be brought with tremendous force against post-millennialists, who separate the waiting Bridegroom a thousand years from the expecting bride, may be urged against pre-millennialists who separate Him by the interval of intervening events, which they fancy must necessarily occur previous to His coming. In both cases, the attention is summoned away from the Son of God to something earthly, and this can never be done without flattening and weakening the tone of the spiritual life. The name of Jesus is the key that unlocks the mysteries of the Scriptures, and imparts light and significance to the dullest details of Old Testament history, and of Jewish ceremonies, and of genealogical tables. With that most precious and worthy name kept perpetually and prominently before the mind, we are pursuing a safe line of interpretation; but if the eye is removed from Him, although it may be to that which concerns His kingdom, we are instantly exposed to the peril of being lured, by the false fires that gleam all around us to uncertain ground.

It should also excite the suspicion of Christians when they discover that according to the views of a certain class of pre-millennial as well as post-millennial writers, who call our attention from the hope of Christ's coming to the events

which they imagine will precede His coming, one must acquire a vast amount of human learning, before he is prepared to form an intelligent opinion of the second advent. He must be familiar with the history of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, and with the changes that have occurred in Europe and Western Asia for more than eighteen hundred years. He must keep pace with the rapid march of the discoveries and revolutions of the age by a diligent perusal of the daily journals, and by plunging into the wilderness of a purely secular literature, which, however it may enhance his reputation as a man of varied information, and win the applause of the world, is almost sure to bring upon him leanness and barrenness of soul.

It is a fundamental principle of Protestantism that the Bible is God's book intended for all His children alike; and that with the anointing which we have received of Him, and which abideth with us, we need not that any man teach us, but each may know for himself, if really subject to the authority of His word, all the duties and doctrines it reveals, and all that pertains to life and godliness. It is difficult, therefore, to determine whether there is more dangerous error in the oft-repeated statement, "Science is the

handmaid of Religion," or in the constant reference that is made to the "Teachings of the Church." Many Christians, for example, browbeaten by the very impudence of Geology, make haste to admit in the face of God's word that the days of creation, which were plainly days of twenty-four hours, made up of the evening and morning, and hence formed by the revolution of the earth upon its axis, were vast indefinite periods extending through millions of years; and they further admit that during these periods death held high carnival, in the face of God's word which clearly states that "by one man sin entered into the world, *and death by sin*." They seem to fear that without these admissions they themselves will be considered ignorant by somebody, and that men of science will become infidels; forgetting that if men of science are such fools as to become infidels, they will neither hurt God, nor His word that liveth and abideth forever, but the loss will be entirely their own, since they will certainly go to hell.

Others have their minds diverted from the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures by that vague and undefined expression, "the teachings of the Church"; when it would probably puzzle them sorely to tell what they mean by the Church, whether the Pope, or the Councils, or the Bishops,

or the Priests, or the Preachers, or the people. But he who is taught by the Spirit to know the things that are freely given to us of God needs neither Science nor the Church to instruct him concerning the origin and the destiny of the earth, to inform him what it was that brought all this woe upon us, and what is to be the end of it all. The humble artisan or the unpretending peasant who toils from sunrise to sunset in his shop or field, having neither capacity nor leisure for heaping together knowledge as riches, may, nevertheless, in his morning and evening hours and on the Lord's day, learn more real truth than the most erudite scholar or the most accomplished ecclesiastic; and he may certainly receive the precious truth of Christ's second coming, to animate him in his round of wearisome labor, without reading one line outside of the inspired writings. He is not called to rummage through human history or the decrees of religious bodies before he can understand the meaning of the language, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v: 8); and before being led by it and by scores of similar declarations to turn away from every thing beside in order to watch daily for Jesus, in happy ignorance of all that is transpiring in the busy world.

The first illustration, then, of the power of the doctrine concerning our Lord's second advent is suggested by the fact that, when believed not only with the mind but with the heart, its necessary effect is to keep the attention continually directed to the Saviour. It is for this reason, doubtless, the subject is so prominently set forth by the Holy Ghost in the word. God saw that it was good for His children, according to the mental and moral constitution with which He had endowed them, and the new nature which He had bestowed, that there should be an object of hope constantly before them, a goal upon which they might fasten their steadfast gaze, a point in the future to which they should hasten with undivided purpose; and hence, as already proved, He taught them from the beginning of the Christian dispensation "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i: 10). It did not please Him to reveal the time of His Son's return from heaven, even to the angels, much less to men, because this would have deprived the doctrine of all power except with those living at the very close of the present dispensation, but He instructed the Apostles to lift up their eyes for it in their day, and through them He instructed

each succeeding generation, and every Christian of each generation, to stand in an attitude of habitual expectancy and of ardent longing for this great event as possible, and not improbable, any hour.

He did not wish His elect, whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, to substitute in place of the truth which He set fully in their view, the progress of mankind in the arts and sciences, and in the attainment of good government, nor yet the varying triumphs of the Church along the track of its checkered career; but to have their loins girded about, and their lights burning, and to be like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. The power and value of a doctrine which leads the soul to an easy and established posture of waiting and watching for Jesus Himself can hardly be overestimated. An old proverb, often heard, it is said, in many portions of Asia, declares that, "If you think of Buddha, and pray to Buddha, you will become Buddha"; and surely that which necessitates a constant thought of Christ, and fervent desire for Christ, and as a consequence, close communion with Christ, can not be otherwise than in the highest degree beneficial to the

believer. Such must always be the result, to some extent at least, when the truth of our Lord's pre-millennial advent is intelligently and sincerely received, as thousands can testify from their own experience.

Dr. Chalmers says, as recorded in his Memoirs, "On Friday, among other visitors, there came to us Mr. Cunningham, of Lainshaw, whose visit has greatly interested and impressed me. He has been reading Irving's work on 'Prophecy'; and though he has some systematic objections to it, yet, on the whole, is highly pleased. At dinner we introduced the topic, and had during the whole of his stay, a deal of Christian conversation, which the company at large not only tolerated, but I believe enjoyed. I must say that there appears to me something very enviable in Mr. Cunningham's state, living, as he does, in constant spirituality; and he affirms the connection to be such between this and the study of prophecy, and that himself has profited so exceedingly as to the state of his own heart, by the attention which he has given to it, that I feel strongly inclined, and indeed promised to Mr. Cunningham that I would make more particular effort both of his books and Mr. Irving's. He promises me a world of enlargement and enjoyment from the study, and says that I have been

wasting my efforts upon political economy. I do not yet altogether agree with him; but, oh! that I had the devotedness of that man! I am sure it is the way to be happy here as well as hereafter. I trust that I have received an impulse from his conversation," (Vol. III, p. 135).

That this impulse was not temporary but permanent we may judge from his clearly expressed pre-millennial sentiments in subsequent years, and from the increased fervor of his own devotedness to the close of his earthly pilgrimage. Thus we find him writing to Dr. Horace Bonar, the well-known advocate of Christ's coming before the Millennium, in commendation of the doctrines and progress of the South Country School, and saying, "It is not of your prophetical, but of your theological views, that I now speak, though to the former, also, I approximate much nearer than I did in my younger days," (Correspondence, p. 306). Again on Ps. 1: 1–6, he writes, "This is a remarkable Psalm, and the subject of it seems to lie within the domain of unfulfilled prophecy. There has been no appearance yet from Mt. Zion at all corresponding with that made from Mt. Sinai. And I am far more inclined to the literal interpretation of this Psalm than to that which would restrict it to the mere preaching of the gospel in the days of the

Apostles. It looks far more like *the descent of the Son of Man on the Mount of Olives*, with all the *accompaniments of a Jewish conversion*, and a *first resurrection*, and a *destruction of the assembled hosts of Anti-Christ*," (Posth. Works, Vol. III, p. 51). Again on Ps. lxviii: 18–35, he says, "There is every likelihood of allusions here to the great contest of the Book of Revelation. . . . But God has in reserve for His people still another restoration. He will bring them again, as of old, from Bashan and the Red Sea, to their own land. His people will '*see Him whom they pierced*,' *perhaps when His feet stand on the Mount of Olives*, and Jerusalem will again become the great central sanctuary by becoming the metropolis of the Christian world," (Vol. III, p. 69). Surely it is very interesting and suggestive to observe how this honored servant of the Lord, as he became more familiar with the Sacred Scriptures, and more and more consecrated to Christ, became more and more pre-millennial in his faith and hope.

Of course it is not meant that this must always be the experience of those who merely study the doctrine of the second advent; for none can receive it except it be given to them of our Father; but when cordially embraced, it works

a marvellous transformation in the believer's character and conduct, because it brings him daily, as it were, into the immediate presence of Jesus. From that time he lives under the very eye of his coming Lord. He rises in the morning with the inspiring thought stirring his soul that he may hear the shout of His descending Saviour before night; and with such a thought attending the following hours of labor and relaxation, it is impossible that he should be self-seeking in his aims, or excessively concerned about his reputation among men, or harassed with the cares of life, or adopt human expedients to achieve success, or sink into the insensibility of spiritual slumber. He has neither taste nor time for personal and inferior objects, because he has heard the sweet promise, "Surely, I come quickly"; and having entered into the meaning of it, he stands gazing through the surrounding gloom, to catch the first rays of the morning star, engrossed with the person of his expected Redeemer. Like Enoch, the seventh from Adam, of whose ministry we know nothing, save that he preached the doctrine of the second and pre-millennial advent of Christ, his walk will be with God in the energy of this precious faith, because he knows that at any time it may be said of him, "He was not; for God took him."

In the second place, of this faith pre-eminently it may be affirmed, "This is the victory that overcometh the world." In nothing, probably, has the evil of the post-millennial heresy been more abundantly exhibited than in blinding the Church to the essential and unchangeable characteristics of the world, that not only eighteen hundred years ago, but that still, and that to the end, lieth in the wicked one. He is as truly the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, as he was at the beginning; and yet he has deluded the children of obedience to a fearful extent into the dangerous fancy that the world is growing better, that it is ceasing from its enmity to the cross of Christ, that it is rapidly attaining a higher and yet higher Christian civilization, until, under the combined influence of science and religion, it is supposed the nations will enter upon a long period of millennial blessedness. What meanwhile is the relation of the Church to Christ? That of a bride to a bridegroom; for "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. FOR THIS CAUSE shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church," (Eph.

v : 30–32). What place had the Bridegroom in the world? It furnished him a manger among the beasts of the stall for his cradle, a cross on which to die, a borrowed tomb in which His mangled body was buried; and during the interval it so thoroughly rejected Him that He had not where to lay His head. What too is His own testimony concerning the emotions appropriate to the bride after His cruel rejection and brutal murder? "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast," (Matt. ix : 15).

Least of all did He intimate that His Church, the elect assembly, the "little flock," would win the approval and love of the world, and exchange pledges of mutual affection, and conform to its ways, and receive its maxims, and act on its principles, and follow its fashions, and keep even with it in the mad race for earthly gain and good. Among his parting words He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love His own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The

servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also," (John xv: 18–20). "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," (John xvi: 33). So in His last beautiful, intercessory prayer before His agony in the garden, He addressed His Father in behalf of His disciples to the end of the dispensation, saying, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [or evil one]. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," (John xvii: 14–16).

After His departure, the Holy Ghost takes up the testimony, and repeats it in the most solemn and emphatic language. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," (Rom. xii: 2). Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our

Father," (Gal. i: 4). "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God," (James iv: 4). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," (1 John ii: 15). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God [*and we are*, add all the ancient MSS.]: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not," (1 John iii: 1); but, alas! the world does know us too well as the consequence of an intimate and unhallowed association with its aims and purposes. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," (1 John iii: 13). "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," [or the wicked one]. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you," (Luke vi: 26). "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," (Gal. i: 10). It is impossible, then, to draw the line of distinction and separation between the Church and the world more clearly and sharply than has been done by Christ and the Holy Ghost. But what do we see? That line trampled out as the bride of the King of kings rushes across it to be caught to the embrace

of His unchanging foe by arms that are lifted in defiance of His authority, and by hands yet red with His blood. We witness on every side indications of the last days when perilous times shall come; when many in the Church shall be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; and when Christendom with its proud boast that it is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing, is ready to be spewed out of the mouth of our insulted Lord.

No Christian can doubt that a doctrine specially adapted to break the Circean spell which the world has cast upon the Church to her deep degradation and dishonor, must be of divine power and unspeakable value. Such a doctrine, it is obvious, is found in the statements of God's word concerning the second coming of Christ, not as an event that can be of personal interest only to those living more than a thousand years after the present, but as an event which our own eyes may behold this very hour, in all its peerless magnificence and with all its momentous consequences. If we really believed this to be both possible and probable, and therefore turned to it with souls lightened by the beams of its approaching glory and thrilled by the solemnities of its results, worldliness would be checked, and

killed, and extirpated from our hearts. We could not then make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. We could not then look at the things which are seen and temporal, as of chief importance in our esteem, but at the things which are not seen and eternal. We could not then fret, and plan, and scheme, and pursue the winding paths of human policy to accomplish our ends; but we would be instantly lifted by this sublime truth above the crooked ways of nature into a higher, clearer, purer region, "waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. i: 7).

History informs us that toward the close of the tenth century, the most intense excitement prevailed throughout a large part of Europe, owing to a belief which extensively prevailed, that at the end of the first thousand years of the Christian era, Christ would return to the earth. Multitudes sold their estates to unbelievers and gave away the proceeds in charities, business was neglected, the fields were left uncultivated, and for some years the wildest confusion and terror reigned. It is humiliating to discover that eminent writers, professing to know the gospel of the grace of God, can use this fact as an argument against the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial advent. They do not remember that at that time darkness

covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. They do not reflect that the trepidation which shook the continent of Europe was the legitimate result of the views now commonly held of the relation of Christ's second coming to His millennial reign; for in those ages of ignorance, and superstition, and legalism, it was generally believed that the thousand years commenced with the birth of the Saviour, and hence the fanatical crowds that were so alarmed were not pre-millennialists, but post-millennialists. They do not consider the proof which their argument furnishes of the low and lamentable state of the Church, when they endeavor to show that the appropriate and unavoidable effect of teaching the doctrine of our Lord's second coming is to produce the greatest agitation and fear.

If such *is* the effect, it is high time to arouse those who are made afraid; for it is exceedingly questionable whether their hope of heaven is not a horrible delusion. It was a leading characteristic of the early Christians that they loved His appearing; and if any who now profess to be Christians do not love it, they ought to be made to understand that there is no promise of a crown of righteousness for them at that day. What would you think of an exile, if he were to exhibit the deepest distress and grief at the summons to

return home after years of lonely wandering in distant lands? What would you think of a citizen, if he were to turn pale on hearing that the court will soon convene, and the judge will ascend the tribunal? What would you think of a wife, if she shuddered and trembled at the announcement that she might expect her absent husband any hour? There is a conscious guilt there that makes them cowards; and when those who claim to be Christians cry out that they can not bear the doctrine of our Lord's second advent, they give melancholy evidence of knowing that there is an unsettled controversy between them and God. They can not think without terror of Christ's coming, because they are not prepared for it; as persons often speak of trying to be prepared for death, thereby showing their utter ignorance of the gospel. It is not by trying we are prepared, but by believing; it is not by doing, but by resting on that which is already done; it is not by baptism administered in the way of immersion, or in any other manner; it is not by confirmation, though received at the hands of all the bishops on the face of the earth; it is not by ceremonies and sacraments, but through faith in the precious blood of Christ alone, as cleansing us here, and now, and forevermore, from *all* sin, we are made ready either for a

dying bed, or to be manifested before the judgment seat.

The doctrine of the second advent, when rightly understood, produces no terror nor disquietude, but comfort, and peace, and a joyful separation from evil. It instantly adjusts the relation between heavenly and earthly things, but it does not lead to the neglect of any present duty, nor to the abandonment of any proper employment. It only exercises the believer to be a man of the tent and the altar here below, as faithful Abraham was; to stand aloof from entangling alliance with the scene about him that will drag his spirit into the dust; and to act in the consciousness that the Lord is at hand, before whom we must all be manifested, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. It forces us to remember that "our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," (Phil. iii: 20, 21); and hence it bids us, as we move across the face of the earth, to be

"Like ships in seas, while in, above the world."

It brings an end to anxious thought about our life, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink;

and about our body, what we shall put on; it lays the check of a high principle upon the folly of heaping up riches for a name or for posterity, when we know not who shall gather them, or whether they will be swept away by the fires of an approaching judgment; and the ordinary aims and ambitions of men it dismisses as the paltry baubles of a past childhood, while our believing contemplation is fixed upon crowns of unfading glory flashing just above our heads.

Oh! if Christians would only walk in the might of this precious faith, it could be said of them, though in a truer and nobler sense, as Macaulay has said of the English Puritans, "Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on the intolerable brightness, and to commune with Him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from Him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but His favor; and, confident of that favor, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. . . . . The intensity of their feelings on one subject made

them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and corruption."

In the third place, the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial advent is intimately related to other precious truths of His word, and conducts us by the logic of necessity to their reception. Dr. David Brown, so often quoted as the leading post-millennial authority, has well said of pre-millennialism, "It is a school of Scripture interpretation; it impinges upon and affects some of the most commanding points of the Christian faith; and, when suffered to work its unimpeded way, it stops not till it has pervaded with its own genius the entire system of one's theology and the whole tone of his spiritual character, constructing, I had almost said, a world of its own; so that, holding the same faith and cherishing the same fundamental hopes as other Christians, he yet sees things through a medium of his own, and finds everything instinct with the life which this

doctrine has generated within him," (p. 6). A moment's glance at the subject will confirm the correctness of this statement, and show that a heart-felt belief of Christ's second coming as pre-millennial, as near at hand, and as not improbable to-day, must carry with it a class of truths of the greatest practical power and value.

(1). No man with this belief wrought in his soul by the Holy Ghost can remain in the bondage of legalism, or in the gloom of uncertainty concerning his state in the sight of God. It drives him at once to examine the ground on which he stands, and it must issue in breaking the shackles of doubt and fear with which his soul was manacled, perhaps, for years. He sees that Christ may come before the morrow, and therefore he can not be sure of sufficient time to make himself fit for heaven, by attending upon the ordinances of the Church, or by forming good resolutions only to break them, or by waiting for the slow process of sanctification, as it is commonly understood, to find in such things the foundation of his peace, but he is brought, like the dying thief, to look to Jesus, and to Jesus alone, as all his trust and all his salvation. He dare not postpone to a future period the effort to attain unto full assurance of hope, but

in the light of the coming glory perceives that assurance of hope is obtained without effort, by simply receiving as true, and true for himself, the word of the Saviour who says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment]; but IS passed from death unto life," (John v: 24); and "By him *all* that *believe* ARE justified from *all* things," (Acts xiii: 39).

Then instead of struggling and weeping to be made meet for the heavenly inheritance by vowing and fasting, in weariness and painfulness, he is found "giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we HAVE redemption through his blood," (Col. i: 12–14). Then instead of striving to settle the question of his salvation, he learns to his unspeakable joy that it has been settled for him by the blood of Christ, and resting upon the finished work accomplished on the cross, and accepted according to the value which the Father places upon that work, he no longer dreads the thought of his Lord's return, because he already stands complete in Him "who of God is made

unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," (1 Cor. i: 30). Then he can share in the gladness of one described by "an honest and warm-hearted pre-millennialist of the Commonwealth time," as Dr. Brown calls him, when he says, "I have heard of a poor man who, it seems, loved and longed for Christ's appearance, that when there was a great earthquake, and when many cried out the day of judgment was come, and one cried, 'Alas! alas! what shall I do?' and a third, 'How shall I hide myself?' &c., that poor man only said, 'Ah! is it so? Is the day come? Where shall I go? Upon what mountain shall I stand to see my Saviour?'"

(2). The coming of Christ being no longer an object of terror, but an object of hope, the believer can enter into the meaning of the Apostle's language, "Beloved, NOW ARE we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in [or, on] him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," (1 John iii: 2, 3). He comes under the purifying power of "that blessed hope," because he *knows* he is even now a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, being made a new creation, and having received a new nature, and rejoicing in a new life, and

stimulated by new affections to reach out with ardent desire for that glorious appearing when he *knows* he shall be like the Saviour. When he was born again, the cord that bound him to earth as the centre of his affections, the object of attraction, was severed; and when taught by the Spirit to look and long for the coming of the Lord, he discovered that he was a dead and risen man, crucified together with Christ, quickened together with Him, seated together with Him in the heavenlies, having his place and portion with Him and in Him in resurrection life, and resurrection security, and resurrection blessedness. Hence he is prepared to lay to heart the tender exhortation, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead [or ye died], and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," (Col. iii: 1–4).

There are other important truths with which the doctrine of the pre-millennial advent is directly connected, such as the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost with His people during the entire period of their Lord's personal absence; the nature, calling, and hope of the Church; the

restoration of Israel; the manifestation of the Antichrist; the doom of the world that is yet to answer for shedding the blood of God's dear Son; the rising from among the dead of those who sleep through Jesus; the rapture of the living who love His appearing to meet Him in the air; the dignity and blessedness of the saints in reigning with Him for a thousand years over the earth; and the inherent and unchangeable malignity of sin as exhibited for "a little season" at the close of the millennium: but want of space forbids enlargement.

It only remains, therefore, in the fourth place, to say that the doctrine shows its peculiar power and its special value in the solace it affords in times of affliction and sorrow, as many can testify to the praise of God's sustaining grace. That it is often employed in this sweet service by the Holy Spirit no one at all familiar with the Scriptures will deny. Look where we may through the New Testament, we find that when the early disciples were weighed down by trouble, the Saviour and the inspired Apostles lightened the burden by pointing to His second coming. It was like conveying to a despairing prisoner in his dungeon the assurance of a speedy release. It was like directing a lost child the way home, where a gentle hand would wipe away the tears,

and the exhibitions of love would be the more tender because of the former dangers and sufferings of the wanderer. To the vision of the first believers, the battlements of the celestial city were already gleaming upon the horizon, and in the anticipation of entering it soon, privations could be cheerfully endured, and persecutions gave speed to their steps along the heavenly road.

Even when death was inflicted, sometimes by the ordinary stroke of divine providence, and sometimes by the agency of man, the soul of the happy believer took its departure from the bed of disease, or through the flames, to be with Christ, which is very far better; while the surviving friends heard such cheering words as these in the stillness of their grief: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in [through] Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [outstrip, precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with

the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," (1 Thess. iv: 13–18). And they did comfort one another, even as we who look for Jesus comfort one another when our hearts' tenderest affections are sorely smitten by the stroke of death; for in the light of the blessed hope of His coming, we know that our beloved ones may not remain in the place of burial one day longer, before His voice may awake them from their sleep, and change the body of humiliation, which we also carry, into the likeness of His own glorious body, and gather us with those we miss from our homes into His presence where there is fulness of joy, and to His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore. Hence, as we follow the precious remains to the tomb, we can catch the prelude of the song which will roll in a tide of melody across our groaning earth when Jesus comes again, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv: 55).

The foregoing statements are written to meet, to some extent, the objections that are urged against the doctrine of our Lord's pre-millennial

advent, on the ground of its practical tendencies and results. There can be no doubt that it works mischief, if studied and proclaimed merely as a speculation to gratify the curiosity of those who are naturally prone to pry into the future, or if made the basis of rash predictions instead of sober exposition of God's prophetic word. But if presented simply as the only proper object of hope, thus turning the thoughts and expectations of the believer off and away from all else unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, nothing can be of greater benefit to the soul, and nothing can be more untrue than the charge brought against it, that it exercises an injurious influence over the character and conduct. It is often said, for example, that it disparages the gospel, but how, it is difficult to see, since those who are looking for the Lord to inaugurate His kingdom claim that the gospel accomplishes all it was designed to achieve. They hold that Christ only intended that "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness [not for the conversion, but for a witness] unto all nations; and then shall the end come," (Matt. xxiv: 14); and that God is now visiting the Gentiles, not to save them all, but "to take out of them a people for his name," (Acts xv: 14). They believe, therefore, that every one without

exception, who has been given to Christ in eternal covenant before the foundation of the world, shall be brought to His blessed feet through the instrumentality of the gospel, and that we have no right to expect any other means of salvation, unless with infants and idiots, that are regenerated, so far as we know, without the agency of the word by the Holy Spirit, "who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth."

On the other hand, the theory of the Arian Whitby, now so commonly held in the Christian Church, seems to be a far greater disparagement of the gospel, because it makes the end which it claims the gospel was designed to accomplish a terrible failure. It insists that the gospel was intended to bring all men, or at least nearly all, to the knowledge of Christ as their Saviour, but it is forced to confess that this intention has been defeated for more than eighteen hundred years. The real Christians on the earth constitute indeed but "a little flock," as compared with the unnumbered millions who are still "dead in trespasses and sins." Perhaps it would be safe to assert that more persons are living to-day who never heard of Jesus than were found throughout the world at the close of the second century, and it is surely safe to assert that His true followers are relatively fewer now than then. In other

words the Church, as meaning those who are really born again, has not kept pace with the growth of the world, nor even of heathenism. Powerful congregations of believers that once flourished in a large part of Asia, Africa, and south-eastern Europe, many of them founded by apostolic labors, and some of them tenderly addressed in inspired epistles, have long since ceased to exist.

In other portions of the old world and in America, genuine Christianity, not the Christianity of a Pharisaical ecclesiasticism, and of forms and ceremonies and shams, but the Christianity of the Bible, marked by sound doctrine and holy living, is certainly making little, if any, advance. The men of education and science are to a fearful extent the busy promoters of infidelity, and the popular system of our Christless public schools directly tends, it is too apparent, in the same direction. Romanism is manifestly on the increase in Protestant countries, and although it has given way here and there in its ancient strongholds, as in Austria, Spain, Italy, and France, it has not yielded to the power of the truth as it is in Jesus, but to the triumph of Rationalism, Pantheism, Materialism, Deism, and Atheism, making the last state worse than the first. If the Confessions of the Reformed

Church were blotted out, it is questionable whether it would be possible to reproduce their clear, concise, and scriptural statements of doctrine; and it is beyond question that the modern Reformers, as Hyacinthe and Dollinger, the one timidly protesting against the stern conservatism of the Roman Catholic Church in refusing to cast herself upon the sunny but treacherous current of the world's boasted progress, and the other beating the air about the empty nonsense of papal infallibility, dwindle into pitiful pygmies compared with the intellectual and spiritual giants of the sixteenth century, whose trumpet gave no uncertain sound.

In the Protestant city of Berlin containing a population of about eight hundred thousand, it is said that less than four thousand attend public worship on the morning of the Lord's day, while the afternoon and evening of the sacred day are almost universally given up to frivolity and amusement. In the Protestant city of London, it is stated that at least two millions five hundred thousand persons never enter a place where the gospel is proclaimed. In the Protestant city of Glasgow, according to a statement recently published by its leading ministers, after making large allowance for the aged, the infirm, and the

very young, it is shown that one hundred and twenty-five thousand souls never hear the word of God. After generations, and in some instances, centuries of Christian labor, the gospel has not reached vast multitudes who live and die unsaved within the sound of the church bells. The same astounding and humiliating results are seen in all of our American cities. In Saint Louis, for example, it is said that scarcely fifteen thousand persons, large and small, out of a population of more than four hundred thousand, are found in all the Protestant places of worship put together, and in some of those numbered as evangelical, it is to be feared that the preaching does not contain the slightest flavour of the truth as it is in Jesus. The same enormous proportion of those who do not attend the worship of God is no doubt found in other places, and the religious statistics of every leading city will show that those who really believe in Christ are not gaining ground, and that they are not holding their own, because not increasing in the ratio of the world's lost and ruined population around them.

But this is not all, nor the worst. The laboring classes, as they are called, are scarcely reached at all by the gospel. Look into our city churches particularly, and you will find fashionable,

well-dressed congregations, but where are the hardy sons of toil who fill our factories and founderies and workshops, and where are their wives and children? In the public parks, or places of amusement, or dram shops, or at home scoffing at the Church. The respectable people who attend preaching do not seem to know that they are sauntering in their gay clothing to the house of God over a slumbering volcano. If they felt sufficient interest, and took the slightest pains to inquire into the moral condition of the rough-clad and rough-handed working men, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, they would be astounded and perhaps alarmed to discover how fierce and sullen is the infidelity which sleeps like a tiger in the bosom of thousands around them, and how rapid has been the spread throughout Christendom of Communism that may burst forth at any moment in a wilder conflagration than that which destroyed Paris. Add to this the appalling progress of Sabbath desecration even in the Church, the fearful increase of corruption among officials of every grade, the boundless extravagance exhibited in private life, the mad race for wealth that stops not to consider the means of its attainment, the brazen effrontery of sin in what is termed the best society, the

frequency and shocking nature of the crimes whose record crowds the columns of our daily journals, and, judging the future by the past, which is the only ground of judgment apart from the prophecies of God's word, it must be confessed that the world is as far as ever from conversion. It is humbly submitted, therefore, that the pre-millennial view of the second advent, instead of disparaging the gospel, honors the gospel by showing that its teachings are in accordance with apparent and admitted facts.

But again it is said that this view lays an arrest upon labors for the salvation of men, and, as it is sometimes expressed, "cuts the nerves of missionary efforts." To test the truth of this charge it is needless to go beyond the range of personal observation. Put in one class those who are looking for the coming of the Lord before the Millennium, and in another class those who are expecting the universal triumph of the Church, and let each determine for himself which are the more earnest, the more faithful, the more self-denying, the more intense in preaching the word, the more instant in season, out of season. Ministers who are sleepily engaged on the Lord's day in imparting to a sleepy handful a confused mixture of darkness and light, and perhaps witness the addition to the Church of scarcely

two or three persons in an entire year, frequently assert that, if they believed in the speedy appearing of Christ, they would quit preaching. This is doubtless the very best thing they could do, for if they are preaching with the expectation that their sermons will convert men, they are manifesting a blasphemous conceit of their ability, and a sad ignorance of the fundamental truth that it is the province of God alone to give life to the dead, through the wonder-working power of the Holy Ghost.

As to the supposed discouraging effect of the view upon missionary efforts, it is simply and notoriously untrue. While these pages were passing through the press, a letter was received from Rev. J. Newton, D. D., one of the oldest, and certainly one of the most devoted and honored of the Presbyterian missionaries in India, in which he incidentally writes, "A large proportion of the missionaries I am acquainted with, both American and English, are looking forward to the advent of Christ, and the establishment of His glorious kingdom on earth, as events which are to consummate our hopes both for ourselves and the nations. It is sometimes said that these views of prophecy have an anti-missionary tendency. But it so happens that many of the most earnest and hard-working

missionaries are just the men who are most widely known as 'millennarians.'" Other missionaries testify that perhaps four-fifths of the young men, who leave this country to carry the tidings of salvation to the heathen, embrace the doctrine of Christ's pre-millennial advent, and that too in the face of the powerful influence of their Theological training. They leave their homes deeply prejudiced against the doctrine, or profoundly ignorant of it, and yet as a rule they do not remain long in dark and distant lands before they become, as was the case with Walter Lowrie and many others, its enthusiastic advocates. So far from "cutting the nerves," it is precisely the truth that braces the nerves of missionary enterprise, and animates the ambassadors of Christ to constant diligence by the inspiring hope of hastening His return.

Those who deny this precious truth seem to think that by bringing against it plausible objections, they establish their own theory. But such a conclusion by no means follows. The pulling down of the one does not necessarily build up the other. They seem to forget also that very serious objections can be alleged against their own system. They might be asked, for example, how the peoples of the earth are to live during the thousand, or as some say, the

three hundred and sixty-five thousand years of millennial righteousness? It is claimed that owing to the temperate habits which will then prevail, to the absence of war and crime, and to the wonderful advance of medical science, human life will be greatly prolonged, and the human race vastly increased in number, so that cities now having thousands will have millions, and countries now having millions will have billions of inhabitants. But as they will be compelled to earn their bread, as at present, in the sweat of the brow, and it is not even pretended that the seasons will undergo any change, for *nature* must not be interfered with, even though God be dethroned, where are they all to find provisions, and clothing, and shelter from the pinching cold? Where are they to obtain fuel and other necessaries that are already becoming most perplexing questions in many parts of the old world? If it be said that the righteous are never forsaken nor their seed seen begging bread, the reply is that this statement has no application to the Church age, and it would never be quoted as appropriate to our own times, if it were not for the wretched habit of thoughtlessly mixing up the Jewish with the Christian dispensation. The righteous and their seed have no promise of exemption from suffering

during this dispensation, and they have often been seen begging bread since Jesus had not where to lay His blessed head, and many of them have starved, and many of them are frequently on the borders of starvation still, as every city Pastor knows, or ought to know, and tens of thousands and millions of people during the last few years have literally perished from famine in India and Persia and Algeria and China. Why would it not be so when the mouths to be fed are multiplied by countless multitudes, and each must dig the means of living from the reluctant bosom of the earth? It would be so, and those who prate of the mighty population, that will swarm on the globe during the thousand years, ought to reflect that from the necessity of the case it would be an unhappy population, and that they are predicting a millennium of woe.

The fact is the Church has become so entangled with the world by the post-millennial heresy, that the former unconsciously adopts the modes of thought and maxims, and principles of the latter. Hence so many Christian ministers delight to preach about the progress of the age, without stopping to inquire what direction the progress is taking, whether from Christ or towards Christ. Hence too, it is no uncommon thing to hear from

the pulpit idle talk affirming the inalienable rights of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to trial by jury, to vote, and to other fancied privileges. Such language may sound very well from the lips of politicians, but surely the child of God ought to know that man has no inalienable rights, except the right to be damned, and that there is nothing good in him except as it is wrought by sovereign grace. Instead, therefore, of being governed by what the world thinks, and following what the world does, we should never forget that the whole world lieth in the wicked one, and that we, as strangers and pilgrims here, must beware of driving our tent pins too deeply in the earth, but sit loosely to all its interests, and stand aloof from all its purposes and plans, "waiting for the coming of Christ." His word contains plain directions to guide His disciples in every relation which He calls them to sustain; and by keeping the eye steadily and singly fixed upon HIM the whole body will be full of light, and there will be no occasion of stumbling in us. Looking back to His finished work on the cross, and forward to the glory that is to be revealed at His appearing, we shall be peaceful amid all the confusions of the unbelieving, and happy even while listening to the voice of His rod.

CHAPTER XIX.

RETURN OF THE JEWS.

THE subject of the present chapter demands a volume for its discussion, but only a cursory view of it is now permitted. It is not necessarily a point of dispute between pre-millennialists and post-millennialists, for the literal return of the Jews to their own land is firmly held by many of the latter, while it is utterly rejected by many of the former. For example, Dr. David Brown, speaking of the Holy Spirit's statement in the Epistle to the Romans, "So all Israel shall be saved,—for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," well says, "If this perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, as respects the *natural* seed, be admitted on the authority of the Apostle, it will be difficult, I think, to avoid admitting their *territorial restoration;* the PEOPLE and the LAND of Israel being so connected in numerous prophecies of the Old Testament, that whatever *literality* and *perpetuity* are ascribed to the one, must, one would think, on all strict principles of

interpretation, be attributed to the other also," (p. 434). On the other hand, the great body of the Second Adventists, as they are called, have been led in some unaccountable way, and in strange inconsistency with their own principles of interpretation, to deny the literal restoration of Israel. It may be well, therefore, to glance at it here, because of the light it throws upon the character of the age in which we live, the revealed purposes of God with respect to our earth, the manifestation of the antichrist, and the moral condition of the world at the time of our Lord's return.

Dr. Fairbairn, who has argued very earnestly and ably in his Typology of the Scriptures against the literal return of the Jews, does not seem to think highly of Hooker's well known remark, that "where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is generally the worst"; but he quotes with a strong expression of approval the following rule of Vitringa: "It is an indispensable canon of interpretation, in regard to divine, as well as human writings, that we must not, without solid and necessary reasons, depart from the primary, proper, and grammatical sense, which the genuine signification of words and phrases, the circumstances of time and action, and the occasion and scope of

the words uttered by the prophets present to the reader; that is, it must only be done, when attributes are connected with subjects, which, in the primary and proper sense, are not suitable to them, for reason then obliges us to go farther, and think of an analogous subject." So plain and essential to any possible understanding of the Bible, or any other book, is the rule here laid down by Vitringa, that it is cordially accepted by the Rationalists themselves. Ernesti says, "The natural meaning is not to be departed from without evident reason or necessity," and Ammon, who was still more rationalistic in his views, declared that, "we are not to quit the natural meaning unless it be frigid, ridiculous, or contradictory."

Taking with us, this "indispensable canon of interpretation," it remains to be seen whether there are solid and necessary reasons for departing "from the primary, proper, and grammatical sense" of the words and phrases, which in scores upon scores of instances positively assert without any figures of speech the future gathering and permanent dwelling of God's ancient people in the land He gave unto their fathers. At the very beginning of their separate existence, we find Him saying to Abram, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art

northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOREVER. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee," (Gen. xiii: 14–17). A few years later the promise was distinctly repeated: "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an EVERLASTING possession; and I will be their God," (Gen. xvii: 8). Still later it was graciously renewed and confirmed to Jacob: "Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed for an EVERLASTING possession," (Gen. xlviii: 4).

Here then we have an explicit grant of a specified land to a certain people *forever* and as an *everlasting* possession; and if it be urged that the words prove too much, since they denote an eternity of existence in the land, the reply is, that even if this were so, the mind that is thoroughly subject, not to feeble and fallible human reason, but to the word of God, would

not stagger at the promise through unbelief. It is well to have the faith of the humble, old Christian, who was asked by a sneering skeptic, "Do you believe that Jonah swallowed a whale?" "No," was the answer, "I do not, but if God's word had said so, I would have believed it." It is well to see that "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and when this blessed truth is received, not as a cold theory by the intellect, but in the power of the Holy Ghost into the heart, it will also be seen that the proper province of human reason is to bow reverently before the majesty of a voice that says, "Be still and know that I am God." The mind of man is too weak and contemptible to sit in judgment upon divine revelation, for, left to its unaided powers, it can not receive the simplest things of the Spirit of God, neither can it know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Admitting, then, that the promise to Abraham demands an eternity of occupation by himself and his natural seed of the land of Canaan, it would be insolence and presumption in us to say that Jehovah can not make the promise good on the "new earth," which He has so plainly and repeatedly declared will form part of His magnificent empire through endless ages, that the doctrine has been universally accepted by believers who possess an ordinary

degree of intelligence, and is taught by Expositors of every school of Theology.

But if any insist that the words *forever* and *everlasting* are sometimes used in Scripture in such way as to show they do not necessarily imply eternity, this may be readily granted, without shaking for an instant the position here taken, that obviously nothing in the past history of the Jews has exhausted the promise of God, and therefore it awaits a future and literal fulfillment. He conferred the land upon Abraham personally, no less than upon his seed, but as Stephen says in his testimony before the Jewish Council, "He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on"; and hence the believing patriarch will enter upon his possession at "the resurrection of the just." With a faith that laid hold of resurrection in the offering up of Isaac, that overleaped intervening centuries, that rejoiced to see Christ's day, he walked like a disguised prince amid scenes that will hereafter witness his coronation, a happy pilgrim, a man of the tent and the altar, sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange country, "for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Nor did the promise take effect for four hundred and thirty years, and even then, after repeated subjugations

and an uncertain tenure at all times, his descendants were scattered abroad in a cruel captivity, and have never been restored as a people to this day. For twenty-five hundred years they have been permitted to occupy their own covenanted land only by the sufferance of their Gentile conquerors, and at the very time of their Messiah's appearing, they were compelled by the most abject humiliations to recognize the domination of a foreign and heathen power. Nothing more is needed to convince those who are willing to take God at His word, that much yet remains to be accomplished of a divine and unchangeable promise to give Abraham and his seed a well defined tract of country *forever* and for an *everlasting* possession.

It may be alleged, however, that the promise was made to Abraham and his *spiritual* seed, that is, Christians of any and every race. But apart from the shocking violence done to the language by such an interpretation, which, it is safe to say, could never have been entertained, if there had been no preconceived theory or system to establish, its absurdity is at once apparent when we remember that it excludes Abraham himself entirely from the blessing; that it is still less true of the spiritual than the natural seed that they have possessed the land

of Canaan; that no one believes the spiritual seed has been or will be confined to that land, which is absolutely necessary to make the promise intelligible according to the view here stated; and that the view in no way relieves but rather increases the difficulty that is felt in the use of the words *forever* and *everlasting*. In no sense can it be true that the particular land in which Abraham and Jacob dwelt was given to Christians forever and for an everlasting possession, as distinguished from any other land on the globe; and if it is correct to say that the promise referred only to the spiritual seed, it is clear that it was a promise devoid of meaning.

The only way, therefore, to escape the literal fulfillment of the promise is to suppose that it was conditional, or made to depend upon the conduct of the Jews. But a glance at the context will satisfy the reader that it was absolutely unconditional, and that this is the fact in every instance where the promise of future restoration to their own land is given by the Holy Ghost in the Prophets. It is true that their restoration is represented as accompanied by faith, repentance, and holiness, but as these are entirely the gifts of God, and are distinctly vouchsafed, they can not be regarded as conditions upon which the

promise turns, because the spiritual and the temporal blessings are indissolubly linked together, and the one is as certain as the other. Their dispersion is conditional, made to depend upon their obedience, but, blessed be God, their restoration is unconditional, made to depend upon His sovereign grace and unchangeable purpose. For example, when He announced by the mouth of Moses that He would drive them out from their land for their sins, not only into Babylon, but to the ends of the earth, He graciously added, "If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live," (Deut. xxx: 4–6).

The ground on which this explicit promise is based, before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, is subsequently presented in a statement that throws more light upon Ethnology than all the speculations of scientific men put together:

"When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel," (Deut. xxxii: 8). Here it is declared that He who "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation," (Acts xviii: 26), had reference in their distribution to that narrow strip of country which He gave to Abraham and his posterity for an everlasting possession. Of course this will seem very absurd to those who "look on things after the outward appearance," but the question here is not concerning our opinions either of our national greatness, or of the despised Jew; it is simply a question concerning God's revealed purpose and plan. The vast American Republic is not mentioned distinctly in prophecy, nor are the Powers of Europe, except to announce their doom, while Israel is constantly before the mind of Jehovah through the Sacred Scriptures. With Israel was inseparably bound up the fate of the mightiest empires of antiquity, as Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, and so in the future, as the chosen hand for inflicting God's righteous judgments, it will become the center of His earthly government, and the source of

earthly blessings to the nations, when Jesus comes to reign.

It is regretted that the numerous proofs of this statement, found in the book of Psalms, can not now be cited. But it is well worthy of remark in passing, that these inspired lyrics, which have been the solace and support of saints through weary centuries, can not be understood, if it is forgotten that a prominent subject of which they treat is Israel in the latter days, groaning in her last and deepest degradation, and then rising in triumph above her foes by the interposition of the eternal and unchangeable One who has never forsaken her. Of course Christ is their chief theme, as He is of all the Scriptures, and as He Himself distinctly testifies, (Luke xxiv: 44; John v: 39); but besides His personal experiences, as here recorded, and the experiences of believers in every age flowing out of their union with Him, there are constant allusions in connection with predictions of His second advent to the restoration of God's ancient people, and their re-establishment in the favor of Jehovah which they have so long forfeited, and in the land which they have so long lost.

This sufficiently explains what are called the "imprecatory Psalms," that are mere prophecies of the inevitable doom which will come upon

the persistent enemies of Jesus, or they announce for man's warning the just judgment of God against iniquity, or they foretell the duty which will be assigned to recovered Israel as the divinely appointed executioners of merited retribution upon the apostate nations, precisely as it is said of the ruler in human government, "He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," (Rom. xiv: 4). It is ignorance of this which has led certain ministers, of whom better things were expected, to unite with infidels in denouncing some of the Psalms as inhuman, and therefore not inspired. If a rebellion arises against their own government, they see no impropriety whatever in putting it down with the sword; but they think it is horrible when God reveals His purpose to put down rebellion against *His* government with the sword, at the close of the present dispensation in which long suffering grace pleads with the proud rejecters of offered mercy. They cry out, for example, against the 109th Psalm, and speak of it as a barbarous war song belonging to a ruder and darker age, but a very slight acquaintance with Scripture would teach them that, instead of expressing the personal vindictiveness of David toward his enemies, it refers directly to

Judas and others like him; and if it be right in God to punish them, it is certainly right to announce their punishment. These presumptuous cavillers might complain with as much reason because the Israelites were used to punish the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, or because the King set on the holy hill of Zion will punish those who defy His authority, or because sin is punished at all, and this is probably the secret of their difficulty with the "imprecatory Psalms."

But notwithstanding objections, it is repeatedly declared that God's ancient people will again be employed, as they were employed at the beginning of their national career, to accomplish the purposes of His deserved wrath, and it is in view of this the Holy Ghost exclaims, "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all the saints," (Ps. cxlix: 6–9). It does not follow, however, that the language of imprecation or of exultation over prostrate foes would be becoming in the saints *now*, who are "partakers of the heavenly calling," whose citizenship is in heaven," who are forbidden even under the sorest

provocation to avenge themselves, who are called to go forth unto Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach, and who have the far higher honor assigned them of being witnesses both here and hereafter of the blessed principle of grace, apart from law. But the Spirit of truth informs us that "to everything there is a season," and "He hath made everything beautiful in his time," (Eccles. iii: 1, 11); and to Israel, as an earthly people to whom are given earthly promises, will be committed the important trust of vindicating justice and upholding righteousness on the earth when the present age shall have come to an end. It is the failure to recognize the marked difference between the two dispensations which has led to such utter confusion in reading the Scriptures, and to the wretched habit of "spiritualizing" the plainest testimonies of the word concerning the divine purposes with respect to the Jews.

Thus, if we turn to the commencement of the prophecy by Isaiah, it is said to be "the vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." If Isaiah, and Amoz, and Uzziah, and Jotham, and Ahaz, and Hezekiah, are to be taken literally, surely Judah and Jerusalem are to be taken literally, and therefore the vision

was not concerning Europe and America, or Christendom at large, but it was, just as the Bible says, concerning Judah and Jerusalem. But if so, we find in the same chapter, that after the announcement of literal desolations for their sins, which has been fulfilled in the eyes of the world, God says, without any conditions whatever, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness," (Isa. i: 25–27). Of what was this said? Of Jerusalem, was it not, that has been literally laid waste? Then, since the prediction has not been fulfilled in the past, it remains to be fulfilled in the future.

At the commencement of the next chapter we read, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning JUDAH and JERUSALEM. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," (Isa. ii: 1–4). Here, the question is not whether figurative language occurs in the description of the lovely scene before us, but whether *Judah* and *Jerusalem* are figurative. If they are, it would be as well to conclude that their threatened calamities are also figurative, and we may give up the attempt to understand the meaning of the Holy Ghost upon any subject. If they are not figurative, it is certain that in the *last days* Judah and Jerusalem will be restored to more than their ancient glory, and will become a source of blessing to the peaceful, millennial nations.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the

islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. . . . And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the streams, and make men go over dry-shod. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt," (Isa. xi: 11–16). Here, the recovery of God's ancient people is said to be "the second time"; to consist, not of a few, but of the entire remnant that shall be left; to be composed, not of those carried captive into a single land, but of those gathered from various countries and from the islands of the sea; to be marked by the cessation of strife between the two great sections of Israel, only a portion of one of which has ever yet returned to their former land; to be attended by displays of miraculous power; and as none of these things can be said of the partial and temporary restoration that took

place at the close of the seventy years of servitude in Babylon, it follows that this remarkable passage refers to a return of the Jews yet future.

"For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors," (Isa. xiv: 1, 2). It is obvious at a glance that this prediction can not refer to Christians or the Church, for the people do not take them, and bring them to their place, nor do they possess the people for servants and handmaids, nor do they take them captives, nor rule over their former oppressors. It is equally obvious that it was not fulfilled at the feeble return from the Babylonian captivity, and therefore, as God's word is true, it remains to be accomplished hereafter.

"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," (Isa. xxiv: 33). "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto

all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it," (Isa. xxv: 6–8). "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken," (Isa. xxxiii: 20). "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up therein, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," (Isa. xxxv: 8–10). As it is an "indispensable canon of interpretation," "that

we must not, without solid and necessary reasons, depart from the primary, proper, and grammatical sense" of the words and phrases in the foregoing passages, it seems that Zion means Zion, and Jerusalem means Jerusalem, for not only are the glorious promises preceded by predictions of the most terrific judgments, which all admit fell literally upon Zion and Jerusalem, but the literal Zion and Jerusalem are confessedly the subjects of the prophecy, at least until the promises are given, and their inhabitants are carefully distinguished from other people and other nations. Judah and Jerusalem must be restored, therefore, and become a blessing to all the earth.

The same thing may be said of the literal import of these words, wherever they occur throughout the beautiful prophecy of Isaiah, for surely there is no solid and necessary reason for supposing that the Holy Ghost meant Great Britain and London, or the United States and New York, or the Christian Church, which is made up almost exclusively of Gentiles, when He spoke of Judah and Jerusalem and Zion. For example, all the commentators tell us that the allusion is to Jesus Christ where it is said, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to

restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth," (Isa. xlix: 6). Here, the relation of Messiah to the literal Israel as well as to the Gentiles is distinctly asserted, but the former having despised and abhored Him, and, as a consequence, suffering the severest afflictions, Zion is represented as saying, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. . . . For thy waste and desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God,

Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord," (Isa. xlix: 15–23). However proper it may be to draw lessons of comfort for Gentile believers from this passage, its careful perusal will convince any mind, subject to the authority of the word, without pre-conceived theories to establish, that it expresses the purpose of God with respect to the Israelites, and hence there remains for that scattered people a wonderful national restoration, with glorious exaltation.

This is true also of the only other passage in Isaiah which can be now noticed. "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be

utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob," (Isa. lx: 10–16). The only fair, honest construction to put upon this language refers it to literal Israel, to whom Moses had said long before, "The Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath," (Deut. xxviii: 13). Indeed the entire prophecy at which we have glanced is concerning literal Judah and Jerusalem, just as much as it is concerning literal Babylon, Moab, Egypt, Damascus and Tyre, so far as they had to do with the destiny of the Jews; and the principle of interpretation

now almost universally adopted in reading the book, by which the threatened curses are literally applied to the Jews, and the promised blessings coolly appropriated to ourselves, is fatal to a correct understanding of any portion of Scripture.

Turning now for a moment to Jeremiah, we find numerous predictions of utter desolation coming upon Judah and Jerusalem and all Israel for the sins of the people, foretelling the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, their partial restoration, their continued iniquity, their banishment into all countries, and their final return in connection with the glorious advent and reign of their Messiah. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into the land that I gave unto their fathers," (Jer. xvi: 14, 15). "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so

will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord. . . . Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever," (Jer. xxxi: 27–36).

"Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto their place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in the land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them," (Jer. xxxii: 37–42). "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness," (Jer. xxxiii: 15, 26). Here, too, as it will not be denied that the threatenings were addressed to

the Jews, and were literally executed, the only just inference is that the promises addressed to the same people will also be literally fulfilled. But if this is so, there can be no doubt concerning their future return with richest spiritual blessings to their own land, for it will scarcely be claimed that all the mercies, pledged to them in the Scriptures just quoted, were made good to the handful of slaves who were permitted to go back from Babylon.

The burden of the prophecy by Ezekiel is precisely the same that the Holy Ghost laid upon the hearts of Isaiah and Jeremiah — the woes of Israel for their iniquities, and their restoration at last to the favor of Jehovah, together with their establishment in their own land. Of course these prophecies contain most important principles that are applicable to Gentile Christians, and teach most valuable lessons to all of every race, and therefore should be devoutly studied by all, but they can not be read intelligently and profitably, if it is forgotten that they are chiefly occupied with the destinies of the Jews. At the beginning of the book now before us Ezekiel sees the glory of God departing from Jerusalem, and from that time it was said of them, Lo-ammi, "not my people." But this is followed by the assurance that in the end they shall again be a peculiar

treasure unto Jehovah, and the word of the Holy Ghost came unto the prophet, "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. . . . And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate

is become like the garden of Eden ; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited," (Ezek. xxxvi: 22–35).

It is no objection to the return of the Jews to say that the blessings here promised are spiritual, for most cheerfully will this be conceded. But the point is that the spiritual blessings vouchsafed, that are infinitely more desirable than all temporal blessings, will be bestowed upon them in their own land. This is clearly brought out in the next chapter, where we have the well known and oft expounded vision of the valley of dry bones. Whatever uses we may appropriately make of this vision in preaching now, the Holy Ghost declares that it was designed to typify the national resurrection and reconstruction of Israel to whom it was said, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land." Moreover, the prophet was commanded to take two sticks, one representing the house of Judah, and the other the house of Israel, and to make them one in his hand, as a symbol of the reunion of the divided kingdom, which every one knows did not occur at the restoration from the Babylonian captivity. "And say unto

them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. . . . And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever: and my servant David shall be their prince forever," (Ezek. xxxii). It is difficult to conceive of a more distinct promise of their still future return to their own land, and happy subjection to Christ.

The book of Daniel has been previously noticed, because of the bearing of its testimony upon the pre-millennial advent of our Lord, and it is noticed again, because of the remarkable revelation it gives concerning the destiny of the Jews. At the time it was written, the prophet was a captive, hanging his harp upon the willows by the rivers of Babylon, and it fell to him at intervals, during the entire period of the captivity, to describe the character and course of Gentile

dominion through the coming ages of Israel's rejection, or, as the Saviour expresses it, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Thus, in the second chapter, we have the vision of the great image, which was seen in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and which the prophet explains as the symbol of four successive kingdoms that shall hold sway over the earth, until, in the days of the last, when existing in a divided form, a stone, cut out without hands, shall fall with terrific violence, and break the image to pieces, and then, after the destruction, fill the whole earth; and the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people. Again, in the seventh chapter, we are told that in the first year of Belshazzar the prophet saw in a vision four great beasts coming up from the sea, which also represent the four universal kingdoms under Gentile rule, with the added information that during the continuance of the fourth in ten confederated monarchies, a power mentioned as a "little horn" shall make war with the saints and prevail against them, until the Ancient of days comes; that "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they [the times

and laws] shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Again, in the eighth chapter we learn that in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, another vision appeared unto Daniel, in which two of the four kingdoms are mentioned by name, and after they are represented as having passed away to give place to other sovereignties, it is said, "In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace [or prosperity] shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes: but he

shall be broken without hand." It is not difficult to see that the persecuting "horn" of the seventh chapter, appearing when the Roman empire shall be restored in ten united kingdoms, and making war with the saints until the second advent of Christ, is the persecuting king of the eighth chapter, with the further statement that he shall spring out of the territory formerly under the authority of one of Alexander's successors, and subsequently incorporated with the Roman dominion, that he shall wield a power not his own, that he shall destroy the Jews, that he shall make war with Jesus Himself, and that he shall perish in an unusual manner.

The ninth chapter brings us to the first year of Darius, when we find that Daniel was not only a prophet, but a student of prophecy, and having learned from the book of Jeremiah that the seventy years of captivity were drawing to a close, he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes, and with a touching confession, that may be regarded as a model for all time. "And while I was speaking," he says, "and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God," Gabriel, being

caused to fly swiftly, came to him with the following important communication: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

First, it is clear that the subject of this prophecy

is not the Christian Church, but the history of Israel, for it is said, "Seventy weeks are determined upon THY people, and upon THY holy city," which of course can be none other than the Jews and Jerusalem, for these were Daniel's people, and Daniel's holy city, and it was solely about these he was praying and fasting and confessing. It is also said that "from the going forth of the commandment *to restore and to build Jerusalem;*" and still further, we read of "the sacrifice and the oblation"; all conclusively showing that it is the destiny of the Jews we are to keep in view in this remarkable passage.

Second, of the seventy weeks, Tregelles, whose competency to decide such a question will not be doubted, says, "The word itself [translated 'weeks'] is strictly, *something divided into* or consisting of *seven parts—a heptad, a hebdomad.* It bears the same grammatical relation to the numeral *seven* as one of the Hebrew words used for ten does to the other of similar meaning. Gesenius simply defines its meaning to be 'a septenary number,' he then speaks of its use as applied sometimes to days, sometimes to years; —the word itself, however, defines nothing as to the denomination to which it belongs, whether the one or the other. . . . In the present passage it takes its denomination from *years*,

which had been previously mentioned in Daniel's prayer: Daniel had been praying to God, and making confession in behalf of his people, because he saw that the seventy *years*, which had been denounced as the term of the captivity of Judah, were accomplished; and thus the denomination of *years* connects itself with the answer granted to him: he had made inquiry about the accomplishment of *seventy years;* he receives an answer relative to seventy *heptads of years.*" It appears, then, that by the seventy weeks we are to understand seventy heptads, just as we are in the habit of saying, the census is taken every decade, or ten decades have nearly completed their course since the declaration of American independence was made. The most careless reader of the Sacred Scriptures must have noticed the prominence and significance of the number *seven*, as the symbol of dispensational completeness or fullness, and it would be easy to prove that the Holy Ghost has divided the entire national history of Israel, from the exodus down to the close of the present dispensation, into three great periods, each of seven times seventy years, just as He divides the genealogy of our Lord into three periods, each of seven times two generations. Without dwelling upon this, however, the only point that now demands special attention is the

testimony, given in Daniel, that seventy heptads must run their round in the future of his people and his holy city, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy," that is, the most holy place, as the language is never in any other passage applied to a person, but to the holy of holies belonging to the tabernacle or temple.

Third, as Bagster's Polyglot Bible correctly states in the margin, the seventy heptads begin from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, when the royal decree was issued to Nehemiah to restore and to build Jerusalem, and not from the seventh year of the Persian monarch, when permission was given to Ezra the priest to reconstruct the demolished house of his God. Moreover, it is doubtless known to every one that the dates found in the heads of the chapters and at the top of the pages in our English version possess no divine authority, and are generally taken from Archbishop Usher's Chronology. But even he, after careful review, and without any doctrinal or prophetic object whatever to accomplish, announced, as the result of patient and particular attention to the point, that the twentieth year of Artaxerxes

corresponds to the year 454 before Christ, and not to the year 446, which is the date still generally retained. As all are aware, our Lord's birth occurred four years earlier than the time assigned in our common chronology, and hence He was crucified in the Jewish month Nisan, A. D. 29, which added to the year 454 B. C., when, in the same month, Nisan, the decree of Artaxerxes was issued, we have precisely 483 years, or sixty-nine heptads from the command to restore and build Jerusalem, to the very month when Messiah was cut off, but not for Himself.

Fourth, the seventy heptads are broken up by Gabriel into seven heptads, threescore and ten heptads, and one heptad. During the first period of seven heptads, "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times," or as it is in the margin, in strait of times. Then follow threescore and two weeks, when "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, [or, 'shall have nothing,' as it is in the margin]: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined, [or, 'it shall be cut off by desolations': margin]. And he shall confirm the [not the, but *a*, as the margin has it] covenant with many for one week [heptad]:

and in the midst of the week [heptad] he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate ['upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolater': margin] and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" ['desolater': margin].

It is clear that the translators of our English Bible regarded the whole of this striking passage as fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, and hence the forced rendering of much of the language; but it is equally clear from the marginal reading, where the correct translation is given, that the prophecy reaches to the close of the present dispensation, and indicates the overwhelming calamities, mentioned so often in the Scriptures, which are coming upon the Jews just before the second advent. It is obviously the design of the Holy Ghost in Daniel to describe the character and career of Gentile power, after the dominion passed out of the hands of apostate Israel, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; and accordingly the seventy heptads reach to the end, when the time shall come to seal up the vision and prophecy, which we know did not occur at the first coming of Christ, for much yet remains to be fulfilled. We find, therefore, that after sixty-nine heptads, or 483 years, Messiah

shall be cut off, and have nothing, for He was so thoroughly disowned and rejected by His own people, His mangled body must needs be buried in a borrowed tomb. Then what follows? "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." This is a remarkable expression. It declares that a certain people shall destroy the city, and they shall be the people of a prince that is afterwards to come, or in other words, the Romans will destroy the city, and the prince afterwards to come will be the head of the Roman empire. There is a break, consequently, between the desolation of the city by the people and the coming of the prince, but of what duration we are not informed; for, in dealing with the Jews, God makes no note of time, except when they are in their own land. It is ignorance of this important principle which has led avowed infidels and writers of the Colenso school, "worse than an infidel," to assert that the Sacred Scriptures contain a false statement in declaring that four hundred and eighty years elapsed from the exodus to the time when Solomon began to build the temple. They tell us that there were 601 years, but they include 121 years during the period of the Judges, when the Israelites were in captivity under a foreign yoke, and this time of shame and of slavery the Lord does not count.

Hence, we are not surprised that nothing is said of the length of the interval between the destruction of the city, when the Jews are sold into slavery, and the coming of the prince, but we are told that he, that is, the prince that shall come, shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, or the seventieth heptad, and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and upon the battlements shall be seen the idols of the desolater, and for the remainder of the heptad, embracing three years and a half, or forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, or a time, times, and the dividing of a time, as it is variously expressed, there shall be utter desolation, until that determined shall be poured upon the desolater, who is to be destroyed by the epiphany of Christ's personal coming.

Of this prince there is frequent mention in the Sacred Scriptures. In the seventh chapter of Daniel he is described under the symbol of a little horn "that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came. . . . And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints of the

Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." In the eighth chapter it is said that "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, [the book of Revelation tells us how the power is gained and maintained]: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace [or prosperity: margin] shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." In the eleventh chapter we have a vision which is expressly said to be concerning things that shall befall Daniel's people, the Jews, *in the latter days*, and which reaches on to the time when Daniel's people, the Jews, shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book, the time also, as it is expressly said of the resurrection of the righteous dead. In this vision the Antichrist, who fills up the seventieth heptad, is described as "a vile person, to whom they shall

not give the honor of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." Here the Critical and Experimental Commentary, of which Dr. David Brown is one of the authors, says, that while the primary reference is to Antiochus Epiphanes, "*Antitypically*, Antichrist's relations towards *Israel* are probably delineated." "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. . . . And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done." Upon this Dr. David Brown's Commentary remarks, "The wilful king here, though primarily Antiochus, is antitypically and mainly Antichrist, the seventh head of the seven-headed and ten-horned beast of Rev. xiii, and the 'beast' of Armageddon, who gathers together thither the kings of the earth against the Lamb, (Rev. xvi: 13, 16; xix: 19)."

It is apparent at a glance that, while Antiochus may have been a type and precursor of Antichrist, the former does not exhaust the

meaning of these remarkable prophecies; for our Lord evidently alludes to the actions of the same person to whom the Holy Ghost, in Daniel, refers, as taking place long after Antiochus had passed away; and the divine Spirit, in Thessalonians, obviously describes the same person as appearing long after the Apostle's time, when He declares that the day of the Lord shall not come, except there come the apostasy first, "and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." It is the same person of whom our Lord speaks, when He says to the Jews, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," (John v: 43). It is the same person who occupies so large a part of the book of Revelation, which, with the exception of the first three chapters, contains a prophetic history in symbol of the last days, embracing the cruel persecution of the godly remnant of the Jews by the Antichrist, who is to be cast alive into a lake burning with brimstone at the true Christ's advent to inaugurate the millennial kingdom of a thousand years. It is the same person of whom frequent mention is made by

the prophets, who, it is needless to say, agree perfectly in describing his appalling wickedness, his daring atheism, his dreadful power, and in asserting that he shall come to an end in a manner entirely unexampled in the history of the world.

But, blessed be God, his authority shall be brief, for, as we learn in Daniel, it is in the midst of the last or seventieth heptad, his idols shall be placed upon the battlements to be worshipped, as we learn in the Apocalypse, leaving twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty and two months, to run his disastrous career. It was the universally received opinion of the early Church that these days and months are to be understood literally, and only within a comparatively recent period was the "year-day system" of interpretation invented, in order that the predictions concerning Antichrist might be applied in all their force to the Papacy. It is clear, however, that such a principle of interpretation, so utterly subversive of the "indispensable canon" of Vitringa, "that we must not, without solid and necessary reasons, depart from the primary, proper, and grammatical sense," would never have been imagined, had there been no preconceived opinion to maintain or purpose to accomplish. If the Holy Spirit had *meant* years

He would have *said* years instead of *days*, and the facts that have occurred since A. D. 1866, the time fixed by post-millennial writers for the downfall of the Papacy, completely overthrow the theories that have been built upon the year-day system, and add one more to the long list of illustrations of man's folly in seeking to bend the word of God, like a piece of soft wax, to suit his own fancies. The Papacy was never more vigorous than it is now. It is keeping all Europe astir with anxiety and apprehension, and its progress in the two great Protestant countries of Great Britain and the United States is so rapid that it may not be long before they are at its feet.

It is true that there is much in Romanism, and, alas! much in Protestantism which is typical of Antichrist, and which is surely leading on to the manifestation of Antichrist, as the Spirit warns the babes in Christ, when He says, by the Apostle John, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time," (1 John ii: 18). But whoever reads the Scriptures attentively and impartially must be convinced that the real Antichrist, who, as Greswell shows, "signifies *another Christ*, *a pro-Christ*, *a vice-Christ*," is neither an organization, nor a succession of

individuals, but a person, appearing in the last days, as the exponent and head of the universal infidelity and blasphemy that shall prevail. Whatever, therefore, tends to degrade Christ as the divine and only Saviour, and to exalt and deify man, is essentially antichrist in its spirit and aim, whether it be found in the Roman Catholic or Protestant body. But this is precisely the tendency of the popular preaching of the day. The humbling doctrines of God's word have given place in thousands of professedly Christian pulpits to the "gospel of manhood," as it is called, and to "the developement of the divine element in every human soul;" and there seems to be little recognition of the solemn truth, that the gospel of manhood is just the opposite of the gospel of Jesus, and that there is no divine element in any soul, until it is born again by the wonder-working power of the Holy Ghost, and thus made a partaker of the divine nature through faith in Christ. Nearly every religious journal furnishes painful proof in one way or another that the Church is drifting rapidly from the ancient land marks both in doctrine and practice, to be speedily wrecked upon the fatal coast of the Laodiceans, while the secular press is helping the Ministers it most admires to ripen the fruit of the world's

boasted progress in the appearing of the Antichrist.

As the sum of God's testimony upon this important subject, it may be stated, that dominion in the hands of the Gentiles since the time of Nebuchadnezzar will demonstrate man's failure far more impressively, and on a far vaster theatre than when it was exercised by Israel; that during the period intervening between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week of Daniel's vision, our rejected but ascended Lord is gathering out an elect people to the praise of the glory of His grace; that the natural descendants of Abraham will be partially restored to their land as the result of a covenant made with a Prince of the revived Roman empire existing in ten confederated kingdoms; that in the midst of the week this Prince will establish idolatry, causing his image to be worshipped, as the crowning iniquity of the self-glorification now witnessed on every hand; that a faithful remnant of godly Jews will suffer terrible persecutions for their refusal to comply with the impious demand; and that in their despair, the true Christ, they have so long refused, will descend from heaven for their deliverance, and for the destruction of their oppressor. Then shall follow the introduction of the millennial reign, and the fulfillment of

many glowing prophecies concerning the Jews, that can not possibly refer to the return from the Babylonian captivity, as when it is written, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you," (Zech. viii: 20–23).

Scores of similar predictions could be quoted, if space permitted, many of which even post-millennial expositors admit must be taken literally, and as they can not possibly allude to the return of a few dispirited Jews from Babylon, neither can they possibly be fulfilled in what is now going on in the Church; not merely because such a supposition would be doing gross violence to the "indispensable canon of interpretation," noticed at the beginning of this chapter, but because it is plainly declared in the New

Testament that the Church as now existing, forming the mystical body and bride of Christ, was unknown to the Old Testament prophets. The Holy Ghost explicitly affirms that it was a mystery, that is, unrevealed, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets [that is, the New Testament prophets] by the Spirit; that the Gentiles shall be fellow-heirs, and of the same body. . . . which [mystery] from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," (Eph. iii: 5–9). When, therefore, the reader of the Bible discovers in the predictions of the old prophets concerning the Jews and Jerusalem, nothing but allusions to the Gentile Church, he finds that which even the prophets did not know. But apart from this, it would be amusing if it were not humiliating, to notice the cool effrontery and selfishness with which Gentile Christians are in the habit of parcelling out all the curses of the old prophets literally to the poor Jew, and appropriating all the blessings to themselves. A Christian in arguing with a Jew might seek to convince him of error by showing that more than a hundred predictions with regard to the promised Messiah have been literally fulfilled in the person, the life, and the death of Jesus of Nazareth, and that

far more than a hundred predictions in relation to the sufferings of His own people have been literally fulfilled in their history. "Very well," replies the Jew, "but I see many predictions promising the future restoration and glory of my kinsmen according to the flesh, in their own land." "Oh," says the Christian," these do not refer to you, but they have been fulfilled spiritually to us Gentiles." No wonder the Jew scoffs at such an interpretation.

It may be asked, however, whether the New Testament does not compel this spiritual interpretation of such passages. The answer is, the New Testament can not be in conflict with the Old Testament, and the fact is, the New Testament confirms the view here taken of the literal application of the Old Testament to the Jews and Jerusalem. For example, our Lord speaking to His disciples of the literal Jerusalem, as all admit, said to them, "When ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh: . . . and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," (Luke xxi: 20–24). If this does not mean that the time will come when Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles, and of course restored to its ancient inhabitants, it is difficult to know what language implies.

Again, after the resurrection of the Saviour, the disciples, who had been sadly disappointed and dispirited by His death, as they "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," came to Him with the anxious inquiry, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He did not give the slightest intimation that they were mistaken in supposing that the kingdom would be again restored to Israel, as He certainly would have done if they had been in error in their fondest expectation, but He only rebuked their unprofitable curiosity by replying, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," (Acts i: 6, 7).

The word *Judaea* occurs in the New Testament about forty-five times; the word *Israel*, about seventy times; the word *Jew* about one hundred and forty times; and the word *Jerusalem* about two hundred times; and they are always used literally, except in the very few instances where some qualifying word is found, as "Jerusalem which is above," "new Jerusalem," or "heavenly Jerusalem." If it be argued that the Apostle tells us, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," (Gal. iii: 28); while it is true that

there is no distinction as to our state and standing by grace, it does not follow that the Jew loses his national characteristics and personal identity by becoming a Christian, just as it is certain that the bondman and the freeman do not surrender their outward condition, and that the male and the female do not give up sex by being united to Christ. Not only is there no hint in the New Testament of the fulfillment in Christian experience during the present dispensation of the almost innumerable promises addressed to the Jews in the Old Testament concerning their future temporal and spiritual blessings in the land of their fathers, but directly the reverse is plainly taught. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," [or change of mind, as the word

repentance really means] (Rom. xi: 25–29). Even Dr. David Brown, as we have seen, admits that the gifts and calling of God, referring to the covenant with Abraham, imply *territorial restoration*, and this is all that is contended for here, without going into the question which he raises of the revival of Jewish peculiarities during the millennium.

Not one jot or tittle, therefore, of all that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall in any wise fail. He entered into a solemn covenant to give to their seed the land of Canaan, and the blood of His own Son has been poured out to ratify the covenant. No power, then, on earth or in hell can set it aside. That Son shall yet reign upon the throne of David, as announced to the virgin Mary, and elsewhere throughout the New Testament, and if readers of the Bible would stop to think, instead of blindly following tradition, they would see that in no conceivable sense is the throne of David in our hearts, nor yet in heaven, but just where our Lord says it is, when He declares He "will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called, A city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, The holy mountain. . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these

days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness," (Zech. viii: 3–8). They are scattered now to the ends of the earth, but He who will gather the dust of His sleeping saints shall surely bring them back to the Canaan of which He said, "The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is mine," (Levit. xxv: 23). For this purpose they have been so miraculously preserved through the bondage and dreadful persecutions of twenty-five hundred years. Found among all nations, and yet not mingling with any, they are still a distinct and peculiar people, surviving the sweeping revolutions of the past, and reserved for a sublimer destiny than the genius of the most ambitious statesman has sought to attain for his country.

To the Jew with far more truth than to the Puritan may be applied the fine language of Macaulay, "For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed;" and if aroused to resentment by the wrongs his ancestors suffered, he has his revenge in the ruin that has overtaken

all who have oppressed them. Egypt, Edom, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Rome, the mightiest powers of earth, have sought to crush them, and have perished for the attempt. Well might Frederick the Great say, "Meddle not with these Jews; no man ever touched them and prospered;" and of the celebrated Hegel his biographer states, that having often and long thought upon Hebrew history, and often changed his thoughts, "all his life long, it tormented him as a dark enigma." It is a dark enigma indeed unless studied in the light of God's prophetic word, but all is clear when we follow with unquestioning faith the testimonies of the Holy Ghost concerning the future of this wonderful people. Already they are largely controlling the course of current events by their splendid intellectual endowments, for not only is it well known that the continental press of Europe is mainly in their hands, but in the more stately journals of science and philosophy, in the professorial chairs of the Universities, in the council chambers of royalty, in the management of finances that constitute the sinews of war, they are quietly and unconsciously forecasting their approaching greatness, when the vail which even unto this day is upon their hearts shall be lifted at the coming of their Messiah to give them the light of the knowledge

of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Then shall be fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places," (Deut. xxxiii: 26–29).

CHAPTER XX.

THE TWO RESURRECTIONS.

THE mind must be in entire subjection to the authority of God's word in order to receive the truth of our Lord's second coming and its kindred doctrines. Faith is the only principle fitted to deal with these great mysteries, and all is confusion and perplexity the moment man's proud reason comes in to ask the foolish question of Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" It is not the province of reason to exalt itself above the testimony of God, but rather, to sit like Mary, humbly and reverently at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. The proper inquiry is not, "How can these things be?" but "what has God said," and the very instant *that* is known, there should be an end of controversy, and doubt, and hesitation. The doctrine of the Incarnation, for example, staggers and overwhelms the human intellect, for it teaches that the self-existent Jehovah who made the worlds, who is from everlasting to everlasting, and who fills immensity with His presence, became man, and so

was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever. Reason can not comprehend it, but faith believes it, and rejoices in the exhibition it gives of infinite love moving for the salvation of lost sinners. The doctrine, also, of His death upon the cross as an atoning sacrifice and of His resurrection from the grave, lies beyond the reach of reason, for although clearly revealed in the Old Testament, and plainly predicted by our Lord, the disciples themselves "understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken," (Luke xviii: 34). When they substituted reason in place of faith, they failed to grasp the simplest and most fundamental truths of the gospel.

But our own resurrection, as well as the resurrection of Christ, belongs wholly to the domain of faith, and hence it is worse than useless to speculate about it. We may advance arguments from analogy, and draw illustrations from nature, but after all we can receive the doctrine only because it is distinctly revealed in the Scriptures. Paul preached it to the Athenian philosophers on Mars' hill, "and when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter," (Acts xvii: 32). Some

reasoned and some believed, as we read, "certain men clave unto him and believed." We know that Christ died for our sins by belief of God's testimony given in His word, and precisely in the same way we know that we shall rise from the dead. The time and manner of our resurrection, therefore, can not possibly be determined by reason, but by the decision of revelation. If delivered from the bondage of human authority, and divested of prejudice, we come to the study of those passages in which our resurrection is mentioned, we may surely learn under the promised teaching of the Holy Ghost, all that it has pleased our Father to reveal to His children upon the subject. That it is a subject which held a much more prominent place in the esteem of the inspired writers than it does in the discourse or thoughts of modern Christians, is a fact that will not be disputed; and it is owing perhaps, to the neglect into which this important truth has fallen that there are such vague conceptions of it afloat in the church.

If these conceptions could be gathered up and expressed in words, it would be found that most persons are expecting the struggle between light and darkness to be continued indefinitely in the future, with an increasing victory of the former, until a thousand, or as some suppose, three

hundred and sixty-five thousand years shall witness the universal triumph of Christianity on the earth. At the expiration of this long period, it is admitted by post-millennialists who have given the slightest attention to the doctrine of our Lord's second advent "there shall come a falling away," and then it is supposed Christ shall appear as the Judge of the whole world, when all that are in the grave, righteous and unrighteous, shall arise together, and appear at His bar to hear the sentence which will decide their eternal state. Such is the common view of the resurrection which it is here proposed to examine. Nor let any one imagine that it is of little consequence whether the view is or is not correct. It is a dangerous device of Satan to turn the mind away from these momentous themes by the suggestion that they are of no practical value, but at best mere theories, fit only for the dialectics of the schoolmen, or as it is sometimes expressed, that they merely illustrate the "fanaticism of dogma." Every truth is valuable, and every error is hurtful, for they exert a direct influence upon the character and life. The growing indifference to truth exhibited by much the larger part of the church is one of the worst signs of the times, and plainly shows that the vaunted strides in knowledge of the past few

years have been made in a direction that leads precisely away from the spiritual millennium which so many fancy to be just at hand.

It is quite the fashion now even for clergymen to sneer at "doctrinal preaching" as worthless in comparison with the interesting facts of this busy age. These shallow thinkers do not seem to know that the doctrines of the Bible are the most tremendous facts in the universe. It is a fact that the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, came down from heaven to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It is a fact, that "he that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," (John iii: 36). It is a fact, that "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," (Acts iv: 12). It is a fact that we must be born again—that the Holy Ghost abideth forever with the new creation effected by the exceeding greatness of His power —that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and that they shall not come into judgment, but are passed from death unto life. Precisely so, it is a fact, and an unspeakably important fact to every human being, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the

just and the unjust," (Acts xxiv: 15); "for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," (John v: 29). There can be no dispute, therefore, concerning the fact that there is to be at some future period a resurrection of the whole human family, but it is not so clearly seen by all that the resurrection of the righteous differs from the resurrection of the unrighteous both as to its character and the time of its occurrence.

First, as to its character, the believer is taught that his body "is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," (1 Cor. xv: 42–44). Again it is written, "our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body [or rather, the body of our humiliation,] that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the power whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," (Phil. iii: 20, 21). Again, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the

dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," (Rom. viii: 11). It is needless to say that this class of texts can not be applied to the resurrection of unbelievers. We know that their bodies are not raised up in honor, nor are they fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, nor does the Holy Spirit dwell in them as His earthly temples to raise up the shattered ruin from the dust of death, and embellish it with celestial beauty, and establish it in sinless immortality. If therefore it could be proved that believers and unbelievers rise from the grave at the same time, and stand together before the judgment seat of Christ, as commonly represented, nevertheless it must be conceded that they will be totally unlike in appearance, and form two great classes essentially different in every respect.

Of the one we are told that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," (1 Thess. iv: 16, 17). Not a word is said in this passage about the dead *out*

of Christ, nor about unbelievers who shall then be living on the earth; and it will be admitted, no doubt by all, that the latter at least, shall not share in the rapture of the saints, and shall not mount up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air in answer to the "shout," which properly means a call or word of command to one's own. But, even if it is true that believers and unbelievers are raised at the same time, it will be further admitted by all who believe God's word that Christ comes for the complete redemption of the one class, and for the eternal destruction of the other. The one are quickened by the Spirit to hear, like an awakened bride, the glad shout of her approaching bridegroom; the other must be dragged forth like guilty prisoners from their dungeons at the stern summons of a judge. The one will spring up like a happy lark on a dewy morning as it sends forth its sweet song in its heavenward flight; the other will seek to hide in the dens and rocks of the mountains from a wrath more intolerable than death itself. This is said upon the supposition that there will be a simultaneous resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous; for it is important to show that in any view there will be a marked distinction between the character and condition of the two hereafter, although the foul

legalism that prevails at the present day has well nigh obliterated the distinction between the two here.

But, second, there is not the slightest Scriptural authority for asserting that the resurrection of believers and unbelievers will occur at the same time. The doctrine rests entirely upon inference, and a careful examination of the passages in which so many think it is taught will convince the unprejudiced reader that the inference can not be sustained. John Bunyan well says, "Now, when the saints that sleep shall be raised thus incorruptible, powerful, glorious and spiritual; and also those that then shall be found alive, made like them; then forthwith, before the unjust are raised, the saints shall appear before the judgment-seat of the Lord Jesus Christ, there to give an account to their Lord the Judge, of all things they have done; and to receive a reward for their good according to their labor. They shall rise, I say, before the wicked, they being themselves the proper 'children of the resurrection,' that is, those that must have all the glory of it, both as to pre-eminency, and sweetness; and therefore they are said, when they rise to rise from the dead; that is, in their rising, they leave the reprobate world behind them. And it must be so, because also

the saints will have done their account, and be set upon the throne with Christ as kings and princes with him to judge the world, when the wicked world are raised." Such is the view substantially of very many writers who have lived since the beginning of the Christian era, and if the names of some of them were here given, it would be seen that they have not been surpassed in their scholarly attainments, their Christian devotedness, and especially in their knowledge of the word of God. The distinguished Toplady, for example, writes, "I am one of those old-fashioned people who believe the doctrine of the Millennium; and that there will be two distinct resurrections of the dead; *first*, of the just, secondly, of the unjust; which last resurrection of the reprobate will not commence till a thousand years after the resurrection of the elect. In this glorious interval of one thousand years, Christ, I apprehend, will reign in person over the kingdom of the just," (Works, Vol. iii: p. 470).

But without citing human testimony, let us go directly to the testimony of Christ and His inspired servants, and we can judge for ourselves whether the resurrection of the just is to precede that of the unjust. In looking at the discourses of our Lord we must be struck with the manner

in which he alludes to the resurrection in the few instances that have been recorded for our instruction. Thus we find him saying, on a certain occasion, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they can not recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just," (Luke xiv: 13, 14). The question might be raised, why did the Saviour speak of the *resurrection of the just?* Why did he not simply say, thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection, without distinguishing it as the resurrection of the just, if there is to be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust at the same time? It seems almost certain that His hearers understood him as referring to a resurrection prior to that of the unjust, which they expected, according to the cherished belief of the Jews, at the commencement of the millennial kingdom under the reign of their promised Messiah. Hence it is immediately added that "when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." The man evidently associated the resurrection of the just with the establishment of the kingdom of God for which the Jews were anxiously looking, and which they believed

would be established before the final resurrection at the end of the world. Upon the meaning of the phrase, "the resurrection of the just," Ryle remarks in his admirable commentary, "This expression is remarkable. I can not think that our Lord used it in deference to an opinion common among the Jews, that resurrection was the special privilege of the righteous. It seems to me far more probable that our Lord refers to the first resurrection, spoken of in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. It is hard to put any other sense on the expression than this, that there is a resurrection of which none but the just shall be partakers,—a resurrection which shall be the peculiar privilege of the righteous, and shall precede that of the wicked."

Passing on to another important declaration made by the Saviour, we read, "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of the resurrection," (Luke xx: 34–36). It is surely worthy of notice that our Lord speaks of some who are accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead. What can be the meaning

of this language, if all are compelled to rise, and to rise at the same time? Worthiness to obtain the resurrection from the dead certainly implies that some will not be esteemed worthy, and hence will not be partakers of the resurrection which is here mentioned. This conclusion is strengthened by the literal rendering of the words which Ryle translates, "the resurrection out from the dead." But the language in the original is still more forcible, for the article *the* is placed just before the word "resurrection," and the same article is used immediately after, while the primary signification of the preposition which follows is "out of, from, or from among;" so that we may read "the resurrection, the or that one out of, or from among the dead." Then to crown the argument, the Lord speaks of those who are worthy to obtain the resurrection, the one from among the dead, as "being the children of the resurrection," implying that others will not share in the resurrection to which he alludes, but will be left behind. Those, then, to whom he refers shall have a resurrection like His own, which was out of or from among the dead, and in this sense we can understand why the disciples were "questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean," (Mark ix: 10). Here the same preposition is used, mean-

ing "out of, from among," and this accounts for their perplexity. They would have felt no difficulty in understanding a general resurrection, or resurrection of all the dead, for this was plainly taught in the Old Testament Scriptures, but they questioned one with another concerning a resurrection from among the dead, leaving some in the grave while others would come forth to life.

A type of this great truth appears at the death of Jesus, when "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many," (Matt. xxvii: 52, 53). Here there was a resurrection out of or from among the dead, and although the opening of the graves is connected with the death of the Son of God, the saints did not arise till after the resurrection of their Lord, when they doubtless went with him to glory, the first trophies of His finished work on the cross, and of His victory over death, and the glad harbingers of an innumerable multitude that, like them, shall ascend from among the dead to meet him in the air. A still more striking type is furnished in the resurrection of Christ himself, who arose from among the dead, leaving the millions of slumberers who were

around him undisturbed in their deep repose. It must not be forgotten that His resurrection has special relation to those who believe on him unto salvation, for it is written, he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv: 25). His resurrection, therefore, possesses a meaning and a power for believers which it can not possibly have for unbelievers, and hence the resurrection of the former as secured and symbolized by the resurrection of their Lord is held forth to their eager contemplation as a peculiar privilege and an exceeding great reward. The evil can hardly be over-estimated which has resulted from the modern habit of substituting death, although seldom mentioned in the New Testament, in place of resurrection; and especially from the common view of embracing the resurrection of believers and unbelievers in one act, and for one end of being judged together. The resurrection of Christ from among the dead ought to be a sufficient pledge that those who are united to him by faith shall have a similar resurrection, and go up to the enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints in light. For such the judgment is already past as to the tremendous question of sin, which was so fully and so finally settled at the cross, that "there is, therefore, NOW no con-

demnation," no curse, no guilt, no wrath upon the believer. It is true that he will be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, but he will find that judgment-seat as friendly to him hereafter as the mercy-seat is here.

This association of the believer in the resurrection of Jesus entirely apart from any interest the unbeliever has in it, is clearly asserted in the word of God, as we read in the epistle to the Corinthians, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. . . . But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming," (1 Cor. xv: 20–23). There is not the slightest allusion here, nor in the entire chapter to the resurrection of the wicked, of whom Christ is not the first fruits, but who are reserved for the resurrection of judgment. Still further the passage conclusively proves that none but believers will rise at the second advent. "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." If the apostle had meant to teach the doctrine of a general and simultaneous resurrection, he would have said, "All that are in the grave at His coming." But if he designed to teach the doctrine of a resurrection confined to His own people, he used the very language to set it forth. It is

hardly possible that he really included all the dead in the statement, "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." The language thus understood as applying only to believers is in perfect harmony with the testimony already quoted from the epistle to the Thessalonians, where we read, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." In both places the resurrection of the saints is the only fact mentioned, and if the resurrection of the wicked occurs at the same time, it is unaccountable that no hint is given of it here or elsewhere. Grace has made wide the separation between the two in the present life, and it is a separation which will be still more strikingly manifested in their different resurrections.

Hence we hear the apostle in another place expressing the most earnest desire to be found in Christ, "That I may know him," he adds, "and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," (Phil. iii: 10, 11).

The first question that arises on reading these remarkable words is suggested by the apostle's intense effort to attain unto the resurrection of the dead. If the wicked are to be raised at the same time with the righteous, surely it was a most useless effort, for there was nothing unto which he could attain. He would be compelled according to this view to rise from the dead, and hence that which was inevitable could produce no anxiety lest he might fail of reaching it. But if the saints are to be raised separately that they may enter into glory at the coming of Christ, we see abundant reason for his ardent longing and steadfast exertion to attain unto such a resurrection. The second question that arises is suggested by the peculiar structure of the sentence, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The Greek word for resurrection is *Anastasis*, but here the apostle actually invents a new word to set forth this distinct resurrection, unto which he desired to attain. It is composed of the ordinary word, *Anastasis* together with the preposition *ek* or *ex*, which as already stated means, "out of, from, or from among." Not only so, but the article *the* is repeated after this compound and unusual word, and followed by the preposition *ek* again. Hence a literal rendering of the passage is as

follows: "If by any means I might attain unto the out resurrection, (or as we might say, the elect resurrection) the one, or that one from among the dead."

Now, why did the inspired writer use a form of expression so peculiar, if there is to be a simultaneous resurrection of the righteous and the wicked? Dr. David Brown says, "The simple answer is, it was not the general resurrection he was striving to attain to—it was not a resurrection common to both classes. It was a resurrection peculiar to believers,—a resurrection exclusively theirs,—exclusive, however, not in the *time* of it, but in its *nature*, its *accompaniments*, and its *issues*." But still it seems almost impossible that so singular a combination of words could be employed to designate a resurrection which embraces all the dead. If the apostle had wished to state that all the dead rise together, he would hardly have used the preposition "out of" in connection with the word "resurrection," or placed the same preposition before the word "dead." It will be observed that he does not say, the resurrection from death or from the grave, but the resurrection of, out of, from the *dead*, and surely such language implies that some of the dead were to be left behind at the resurrection unto which Paul

desired to attain. Dr. Brown labors strenuously to show that this view is in direct conflict with the testimony of Daniel who says, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," (Dan. xii: 2).

It is strange that a writer having the acuteness of intellect possessed by this able opponent of the truth did not perceive that the text fails to prove a general and contemporaneous resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, for it does not say *all*, but only *many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Even admitting, then, that the righteous and wicked rise together, it can not be shown from this passage that *all* will rise, for the resurrection is expressly limited to *many*. Tregelles, everywhere recognized as one of the most eminent of all our Biblical scholars and critics, translates the passage as follows: "Many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those [the rest of the sleepers] shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt." He goes on to say, "I have given I believe, the most literal rendering of this verse; it speaks of a resurrection, not the general, when all shall be called forth, but one of an eclectic character, 'many from amongst the sleepers.' "This

passage" he adds, "has been understood by the Jewish commentators in the sense that I have stated." So far, then, from proving a simultaneous resurrection of believers and unbelievers, it proves the reverse, and is in precise accordance with the declarations of the New Testament which have been noticed. In conformity with all this we read in the Psalms, "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me," (Ps. xlix: 14, 15). It requires no exposition to show what is meant by the "morning," nor to prove that the beauty of the wicked will be consumed in the grave, while the righteous shall be redeemed from its power.

We come now to the well-known passage which distinctly asserts the doctrine here advocated. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand

years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years," (Rev. xx: 1–6).

Upon this passage Dean Alford, the eminent Commentator, makes the following remarks: "I can not consent to distort the words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole church for three hundred years, understood them in the plain literal sense; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence for antiquity,

complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain persons lived at the first, and the rest of the dead only at the end of a specified period after that first,—if, in such a passage, the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave;—then there is an end of all significance in language, *and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything.* If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain; but if the second is literal, so is the first, which, in common with the whole primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope." Those, then, who hold the doctrine of two resurrections, the one at the beginning, and the other at the close of the millennium, need not be disturbed when told that they are regarded as "eccentric," or "crazy;" for according to the testimony of this distinguished scholar, they stand "with the whole

primitive church and many of the best modern expositors."

The Commentary of which Dr. David Brown is one of the Editors, referring to the word *souls* in the testimony of St. John, says, "This term is made a plea for denying the literal first resurrection, as if the life and reign of souls were raised in this life from the death of sin by vivifying faith. But 'souls' expresses their *disembodied* state at first; 'And they live again' implies their *coming to life in the body again*, so as to be *seen* by John, as vs. 5, 'This is the first resurrection' proves: for as 'the rest of the dead lived not (again) until' &c., must refer to the *bodily* general resurrection, so must the *first resurrection* refer to the body. If the first resurrection be not corporeal, then the saints do not rise at all; for they do not rise with 'the rest of the dead.' . . . . Paul was *beheaded*, and shall share *the first resurrection*, in accordance with his prayer that he 'might attain unto *the resurrection from out of the rest of the dead*' [*exanastasis*]." Again the Commentary describes the dead small and great, who stand before the great white throne after the thousand years at the final judgment, as "the rest of the dead, who did not share the first resurrection, and those who died during the millennium." Of

course it would be unfair to represent these statements as expressing the present belief of Dr. Brown, but it is at least comforting to find him associated with a colleague who can give such sound expositions of Scripture. Auberlien takes the same view, and after showing that those who were seen by the Apostle, as risen at the beginning of the thousand years, include all the saints who had lived up to that time, he says, "This is the *first resurrection*, as distinguished from the second, general one, which is mentioned in the twelfth verse. Of this first resurrection our Saviour likewise speaks (Luke xiv: 14), and designates it as the resurrection of the just; and Paul also (1 Cor. xv: 23), where he evidently distinguishes three gradations of resurrection: Christ, the first fruits, rose first; then they who belong to Him at His appearance; then—*eita*, corresponding to *epeita*, that preceded, and again introducing a considerable interval—the end, that is the general resurrection."

Bishop Newton, also, after stating that the passage teaches "a particular resurrection preceding the general one at least a thousand years," goes on to say, "This prophecy therefore remains yet to be fulfilled, even though the resurrection be taken only for an allegory, which yet the text can not admit without the greatest torture and

violence. For with what propriety can it be said, that some of the dead who were beheaded, 'lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished;' unless *the dying* and *living again* be the same in both places, a proper death and resurrection? . . . If the martyrs rise only in a spiritual sense, then *the rest of the dead* rise only in a spiritual sense, but if *the rest of the dead* really rise, the martyrs rise in the same manner. There is no difference between them; and we should be cautious and tender of making the first resurrection an allegory, lest others should reduce the second into an allegory too, like those whom St. Paul mentions, (2 Tim. ii: 17, 18), 'Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying, that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.' It is to this first resurrection that St. Paul alludes, when he affirms (1 Thess. iv: 16,) that 'the dead in Christ rise first,' and (1 Cor. xv: 23,) that 'every man shall be made alive in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming, and then cometh the end,' after the general resurrection," (Newton on the Prophecies, p. 586–7).

Olshausen, too, in an able introductory chapter

on the book of Revelation says, "This simple radical idea, is merely, that as, in regard to an individual man, God by the Saviour redeems not merely a particular part of him, his spirit alone, or his body alone, but the *whole* man, his body, soul, and spirit, so the redeeming power of Christ has for its object the deliverance of the entire human race, [except of course, unbelievers] and of the creation, in general, from the yoke of sin. . . . Proceeding from this fundamental idea, the Revelation teaches in sublime imagery, agreeing perfectly with the statements of our Lord and the apostles (which are less formal, and rather take the doctrine for granted, and thus are more incidental,) that a period will come in which not only, as has already been the case, the Spirit of Jesus Christ should prevail in secret, and guide men's minds, but should also gain the victory externally, and found a kingdom of peace and righteousness upon earth. Now, that with the arrival of this reign of peace there will be connected on the one hand, *the appearance of Jesus Christ* and *a resurrection of many saints and pious men*, and, on the other, a previous mighty struggle on the part of evil—does indeed follow very naturally from the fundamental idea, and the supposed development of good and evil; but these points

are only incidental. . . . It would not have been worth while, with our present purpose, to say even the little we have said on this subject, were there not so many well-meaning men of real piety, who, notwithstanding the most striking historical proof, can never prevail upon themselves to admit the Revelation to be a genuine apostolic production, and therefore entitled to a place in the canon, and thus to become a rule of faith, because they feel that they must in consequence admit the reign of God upon earth in their circle of belief, which they suppose they neither can, nor ought to do. May such be led to a thorough investigation of this idea, and of all the passages of Scripture which relate thereto, that the acknowledgment of evangelical truth in this respect may be promoted, and its fulfillment be rendered near at hand."

On the other hand, Mr. Barnes, speaking for the large school of expositors to which he belongs, says, "The following points, then, according to the interpretation proposed, are implied in the statement respecting 'the first resurrection,' and these will clearly comprise *all* that is stated on the subject.

(1.) "There will be a reviving, and a prevalence of the spirit which actuated the saints in the best days, and a restoration of their principles

as the grand principles which will control and govern the church, *as if* the most eminent saints were raised again from the dead, and lived and acted upon the earth.

(2.) "Their memory will then be sacredly cherished, and they will be honored on the earth with the honor which is due to their names, and which they should have received when in the land of the living. They will be no longer cast out and reproached; no longer held up to obloquy and scorn; no longer despised and forgotten, but there will be a reviving of sacred regard for their principles, *as if* they lived on the earth, and had the honor which was due them.

(3.) "There will be a state of things upon the earth, *as if* they thus lived and were thus honored. Religion will no longer be trampled under foot, but will triumph. In all parts of the earth it will have the ascendency, *as if* the most eminent saints of past ages lived and reigned with the Son of God in his kingdom. A spiritual kingdom will be set up with the Son of God at the head of it, which will be a kingdom of eminent holiness, *as if* the saints of the best days of the church should come back to the earth, and dwell upon it. The ruling influence in the world will be the religion of the Son of God, and the

principles which have governed the most holy of His people."

In addition to such astounding statements, he makes two other remarks to tell us, "It may be implied that the saints and martyrs of other times will be employed by the Saviour in embassies of mercy; in visitations of grace to our world to carry forward the great work of salvation on earth," and "In connection with these things, and in consequence of these things, they may be during that period, exalted to higher happiness and honor in heaven." Such is the exposition of this important passage as given by the most popular writer among our post-millennial brethren, "and these" he gravely informs us, "will clearly comprise *all* that is stated on the subject." If this is so, it is not rash to assert that every doctrine of the Bible can be easily explained away, and the Sacred Scriptures are not worth a straw as a rule of faith and practice. Mr. Barnes exhibits in his commentaries great fondness for the little words, *as if*, and when he comes across a doctrine which does not happen to strike his fancy, he speaks of it *as if* it were true. On such a principle of interpretation as this, want of logic, and God's sovereign grace are the only safeguards against utter infidelity. The Universalist reads the words, "He that believeth not

shall be damned," (Mark xvi: 16), and says it can only mean *as if* he shall be damned. The Unitarian reads the words, "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever," (Rom. ix: 5,) and says it means *as if* Christ were over all, God blessed forever. Thus the explicit testimony of the Holy Ghost is quietly set aside unless it accords with the predilections or prejudices of the reader, and the book that contains the revealed will of God is pushed beyond the reach of any man's understanding, or is left a prey to every man's fancy. This wicked habit on the part of many theological writers of dealing with the plain statements of the word of Jehovah *as if* they were true is more dangerous, and is doing more to undermine the foundations of Christianity than the boldest assaults of Rationalism, Deism, and Atheism.

Mr. Barnes insists that when the apostle saw certain persons who once were dead, living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, he only saw a revival of the martyr spirit and a restoration of the principles which actuated the saints in the best days. But why should there be a revival of the martyr spirit during the millennium? It is certainly torturing language as severely as the enemies of

the cross tortured those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped Antichrist, to make their resurrection mean a revival of their heroic spirit in the Church; but the exposition becomes absolutely incredible when we remember that there will be no occasion for the display of the martyr spirit during the reign, either personal or spiritual, of Christ over earth. The spirit of the martyrs will be out of place when there will be no persecution, and no visible opposition to the cause of the Redeemer. Mr. Barnes himself, borrowing from Dr. David Brown, says that the period to which the inspired writer here alluded "will be characterized by the universal diffusion of the revealed truth;" "that it will be marked by unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ," that "there will be great progress in all that tends to promote the welfare of man;" that "it will be a period of the universal reign of peace;" that "there will be a general prevalence of evangelical religion;" and surely in such a period there will be almost as little to call forth the steadfast endurance which led men to be beheaded for the witness of Jesus, as there can be in heaven.

But if the theory that the revival of the spirit of the martyrs exhausts the meaning of the first

resurrection is absurd, the supposition that it refers to the restoration of their principles during the thousand years is equally opposed to common sense. Let us look at the words of the apostle: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Did the rest of the principles live not again until the thousand years were finished? The rest of what principles? The principles that controled and governed the saints in the best days? Did they not live again until the thousand years were finished? Or does the apostle allude to the principles that did not control and govern the church in the days of the martyrs? This can not be, for he speaks of only one class, a part of which lived and reigned with Christ, and the rest of which lived not again until the thousand years were finished. But we read in the next verse: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death had no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." We may conceive of principles reigning, but how can principles be priests of God and of Christ? Elsewhere in the book of Revelation we read; "Unto him that loved [or loveth] us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings

and priests unto God and His Father," (Rev. i: 5, 6). Christ certainly does not wash His principles in his own blood, and yet the kings and priests of one passage must mean the same thing as the kings and priests of the other passage, or as Alford says, "there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything."

But the post-millennialists go to still greater lengths in their determination not to receive the plainly revealed truth of two resurrections, for while admitting that the resurrection after the millennium is literal, they claim that the resurrection at the beginning of the millennium is figurative. The beloved disciple saw three classes of the dead, those whom he had first seen sitting upon thrones as representatives of the glorified church, those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and those who had refused to worship Antichrist during his brief but dreadful supremacy, and they lived and reigned with their Lord a thousand years. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Obviously, therefore, it is a wretched and ruinous mode of interpretation which views one part of the dead in a figurative, and the rest of the dead in a literal sense. What would be thought

of a writer of history if he should speak of one part of an army as crossing a river, but the rest of the army did not cross for a week, when he really meant that in one case certain principles, and in the other literal persons passed over, though the army itself crossed together? Manifestly, if "the rest of the dead" must be understood literally, so must the other dead who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, but if these are to be taken figuratively, so must the rest of the dead, and hence we have no resurrection at all in the passage now under consideration. But if a literal resurrection is not taught here, it is not taught anywhere in the word of God, for the testimony of Christ and the apostles given in other portions of Scripture can be explained away as easily as the language which affirms that there is a first resurrection at the beginning of the millennium, and that the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Well does Bishop Newton say, "we should be cautious and tender of making the first resurrection an allegory, lest others should reduce the second into an allegory too."

It may be urged, however, that this is the only place where the doctrine of the first and second resurrection is taught. This is not true, as previously shown, but even admitting it to be so,

it will at once command the faith of the soul that is in subjection to the authority of God's word. There are only two places in the New Testament, where the resurrection of the wicked is plainly asserted, but these are enough to satisfy the mind that is willing to believe what the Lord has spoken. Nor does the objection, urged at great length by Dr. Brown, that only the martyrs are here said to live and reign with Christ a thousand years, disprove the doctrine of two distinct resurrections separated by the millennium. The fact is the objection omits the first class seated on thrones, representatives of the church seen in the fourth and fifth chapters, to which the apostle adds two other classes who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and who had not worshipped the beast; but if only the martyrs arise, and "the rest of the dead" include the whole of the human family besides, still there would be two resurrections. Nor does the fact that the resurrection of the just and the unjust is mentioned together, show that there is to be a simultaneous rising from the grave. The Saviour says, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil,

unto the resurrection of damnation," (John v: 28, 29). But just before he had said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live," (John v: 25). As we know that the "hour" for hearing and living has already continued for more than eighteen hundred years, so the "hour" for rising from the graves may be extended through a thousand years that the Scripture may not be broken.

The only other place in which the resurrection of the wicked is distinctly mentioned, is in the address of the apostle Paul before Felix when he said, there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust," (Acts xxiv: 15). But it is begging the question to assume that there will be a contemporaneous resurrection of the two, for nothing is more common in Scripture than to bring together events that are widely separated in their actual occurrence. As Dr. Hodge says, "The predictions of the Old Testament produced the universal impression that the first coming of Christ was to be attended at once by events which we learn from the New Testament require ages to bring about." For example, our Lord, standing up in the synagogue of Nazareth to read the Scriptures, found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the

Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," (Luke iv: 18, 19). At this point He closed the book, and gave it to the minister again, and sat down. The quotation is from Isaiah lxi: 1, 2, but by turning to the prophecy it will be seen that our Saviour abruptly broke off at a comma in the middle of the second verse, which adds, "and the day of vengeance of our God." The prophet with a single stroke of the pen included both comings of Christ, but He did not complete the quotation, because His first coming was "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and only at His second coming shall "the day of vengeance of our God" be on hand. The apostle Peter speaks of the ancient prophets "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," (1 Pet. i: 11), and yet it was hard for the disciples themselves to learn that there was to be a wide interval of separation between the sufferings and the manifested glory, because they were so often

mentioned in immediate connection. It can not be inferred, therefore, from the statement that "there is to be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust," that they are to rise at the same time, for the resurrection of the just is mentioned first, and the inference would not hold with regard to many statements which bring the first and second advent of the Lord within the compass of a single verse. By hastening to the unwarrantable conclusion that the predicted sufferings and the glorious kingdom of the Messiah were to be contemporaneous, the Jews were led into a fatal mistake, and we should be careful to look at the entire scope of revealed truth upon any subject which demands our attention, so that we may interpret one text in the light of another.

We read, for example, the familiar passage, "Every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits: afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Every man in his own band or cohort, as the word properly means, or in his own order of succession: Christ the first fruits, who as the divine captain of our salvation is in himself a host, and afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. We know that the word *afterward*

embraces more than eighteen hundred years that have elapsed since Christ rose from the dead, although if we did not know it the reader might suppose that the resurrection of the Lord was to be succeeded immediately by the resurrection of His people. "Then cometh the end." Whether the word *then* indicates that what follows is to transpire at once, or after an interval be it long or short, can only be determined by its use in other passages. Now in the same chapter it is said "He was seen of Cephas, THEN of the twelve—after that, he was seen of James: THEN of all the apostles," (1 Cor. xv: 5–7). Here the Greek word which is translated *then* in both places, unquestionably implies an interval. Elsewhere we read of some who "have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended," (Mark iv: 17). The word translated *afterward* is the same used by the apostle when he writes, "*Then* cometh the end." Again, in the verse, "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," (Mark iv: 28), the words *then*, and *after that* are the same used to indicate the coming of the end subsequent to the resurrection of the saints; and therefore no man has a right to say that the end is contemporaneous

with the resurrection of the just at the advent of Christ. From the manner in which the word *then* is employed in the New Testament, it is obvious that a thousand years may elapse before the end when Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father.

Nor is there any force in the objection to this view founded on the judgment scene described by the Saviour himself. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations," (Matt. xxv: 31, 32). In the first place, the word rendered *nations* is the term used by the inspired writers to describe the "Gentiles," and is so translated ninety-two times, while four times it is translated "heathen." In the second place, there can be neither nations nor Gentiles as such in the eternal state, and, therefore, the scene here can not be the final judgment. In the third place, it is witnessed, as the context plainly shows, at the coming of Christ, which, it has already been abundantly proved, will precede the millennium. In the fourth place, the titles our Lord here assumes, as Son of man and king, are not those He would take at the final judgment ushering in eternity. In the fifth place, there is not the slightest intimation of

a resurrection, or a hint that the dead will then stand before the throne of His glory. In the sixth place, there is nothing to indicate that the books will be opened, or that the judgment will take place on the ground of the judgment that will occur after the thousand years. In the seventh place, there is not the slightest mention of faith in Christ as the test question upon which destiny is decided. In the eighth place, the principle on which the judgment here proceeds is totally inapplicable to an immense majority of the human race, who have never heard of the "brethren" of Christ, much less have they had an opportunity of treating these brethren kindly or cruelly. In the ninth place, no Christian could express surprise, or confess ignorance, as the "sheep" here do, when the king informs them that ministry to His brethren is service to Himself; for every child of God knows that Christ and His people are one. In the tenth place, the scene evidently implies persecution, and this has not been true of multitudes of Christians. In the eleventh place, we are told that Christians will be associated with the Lord in the judgment of the world, and this is the only place where the promise can be fulfilled. Without going further, enough, probably, has been said to justify the remark of Greswell, when

he declares his belief that not one Christian, now living, or living in the past, was intended by the Speaker to be comprehended among the "sheep," who are clearly distinct from the "brethren," and are accepted because their kind treatment of Christ's messengers manifests their longing for Christ himself in an evil and perilous day.

The truth is, "these my brethren" are not judged at all at that time, but it is plain that the judgment here mentioned has reference only to the living nations or Gentiles, and is in precise accordance with the repeated testimony of the old prophets, among whom, we find Joel, for example, saying, "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about," (Joel iii: 11, 12). "These my brethren" are probably the elect and faithful remnant of Israel found among all nations, who shall cling to the hope of their fathers amid sore persecutions and trials, patiently waiting for the promised deliverance of their expected Messiah, when all the world shall wander after the beast, the false Christ, who will then have power. Some there will be among the Gentiles or nations,

of whom Jethro in the wilderness was a striking type, when he "rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord has done to Israel;" who will receive the testimony of these witnesses for Jesus, after the rapture of the risen and changed saints to meet Him in the air; and thus through their belief boldly exhibiting their sympathy with the persecuted, they will stand, as a few did at the first advent, waiting for the consolation of Israel, to receive His approval and to be admitted into His kingdom, "when the Son of man shall come in his glory." The scene, then, is not heavenly, but earthly, and occurs when the Lord shall descend at the beginning of the millennium. On the other hand the final judgment occurs after the millennium, when the rest of the dead who had no part in its glories shall come forth from the graves, and when, as St. John tells us, the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works. As in Matthew, not a word is said about the dead, but only the living, so in Revelation, not a word is said about the living, but only the dead. Nor is there an intimation that at the final judgment, which ushers in the eternal state, any are found written in the book of life, or if any, they

are those who have fallen asleep during the thousand years, as we have some reason to believe, from Isaiah lxv: 20, that death will be known, although at long and rare intervals, even in the millennium. But for all that is said to the contrary that book may be a total blank, for we have the testimony of the Saviour that the believer shall not come into judgment, and there is therefore, now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

It is true "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ," (Rom. xiv: 10); and again it is written, "we must all appear [or be manifested] before the judgment seat of Christ," (2 Cor. v: 10); but that judgment can not possibly affect the salvation of the believer, because judgment in his case has already been pronounced and executed upon his substitute. It has reference only to his works as a saved person, for "every man's work shall be made manifest," (1 Cor. iii: 13); and if the work which he has built upon the only foundation can abide the searching test, he shall receive a reward. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire," (1 Cor. iii: 15). The order seems to be that at the coming of Christ the righteous dead shall be raised up and be

manifested before him, not to have the question of their deliverance from wrath determined, but to have the reward of grace decided which each will receive according to the deeds done in the body; and then after this family settlement the Lord descends for the judgment of the living nations in which the redeemed will be associated with Him, as well as during His rule of the earth; and at the end of the millennial kingdom, the wicked dead are to be raised up to meet their final doom. If therefore Christ does not come before the millennium, he will not come at all, for at the judgment of the great white throne, He is not represented as coming to the earth, but "the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them," (Rev. xx: ii). "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," (2 Pet. iii: 14); and may God give us grace to abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John ii: 28); and may we "look to ourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8), when we attain through Him that loved us unto the "out resurrection, the one from among the dead."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

THE reader, who is not familiar with the teachings of Sacred Scripture concerning the second advent of Christ, will regard it as a contradiction to affirm in one breath that there is no predicted event between the present moment and His coming, and to assert in another breath that the Jews will be partially restored to their own land, that the Antichrist will be manifested, and that other prophecies must be fulfilled previous to His glorious appearing. Many, indeed, properly classed among pre-millennialists, are confused upon this point, and can not understand with what consistency they are urged to be daily "looking for that blessed hope," and, at the same time, are reminded that signs of the most tremendous import will usher in the Son of man heralded by the clouds of heaven. The difficulty, however, formidable as it appears, will instantly vanish when we remember that the coming of the Lord sustains a two-fold relation to the inhabitants of the earth,

and must, therefore, be viewed in a two-fold aspect. It has to do with those who believe on him to their eternal salvation, and it has to do with those who reject Him to their everlasting destruction. Owing, no doubt, to the deplorable mistake so common at present of putting these distinct classes together in our thoughts of the Lord's second coming, there are multitudes who entirely overlook a plainly revealed doctrine of the word which teaches that the Saviour is to come *for* His saints, and he is to come *with* them to the overthrow of the hosts of Antichrist, and to the judgment of the living nations.

Nor let any one infer from this that there are to be two comings of Jesus in the future. Even if there were, the objection to the truth advocated in this chapter is urged with bad grace by those who insist that Christ has come thousands and millions of times since His ascension from the Mount of Olives, in every startling providence, in every revival, in every death, during the last eighteen hundred years. There is to be one coming, but it is to be considered in two very different aspects. In the solemn parable of the ten virgins recorded in the twenty fifth chapter of Matthew, the wise virgins are represented as arising and trimming their lamps, and joining the bridegroom as he proceeds on his way, while

the foolish virgins afterwards appear asking for admittance into his presence; and yet there are not two comings described in this impressive imagery. It may be proper to say that there were two stages in his journey, marked by his arrival at the spot where the wise virgins gathered about him, and then again by his arrival at its end, but there was only one coming. His coming *for* them was unattended by any signal save the cry at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh;" but his coming *with* them was announced by their torches flashing through the darkness, and by the glad songs of the jubilant procession sweeping onward under his guard and guidance to the marriage festival. Here then we have one coming viewed in two different aspects; and it may be said with perfect propriety that there was no predicted event between the moment the virgins took their places by the way side and the arrival of the bridegroom *for* them, although his subsequent appearing *with* them was proclaimed by sights and sounds that foretokened the final accomplishment of his purposes.

But, to illustrate this important truth in another manner, let us suppose that a king is approaching at the head of his army a city, held by cruel insurgents, and yet containing some who are

loyal to his person and government. Let us suppose that in a message communicated by trusty ambassadors to his friends, he had enjoined upon them to watch for him continually, because there would be no sign of his coming; but after secretly entering one of the gates, he desired them to rally around his standard, and to follow him through the streets, while he inflicted condign punishment upon the rebels who had trampled his authority under foot. In this case we can at once perceive that there would be but one coming, though in a certain sense it would be unannounced except by a word of promise to his faithful adherents, while in another sense it would be made known to his enemies by the roar of cannon and the gleam of bayonets. Again, let us suppose that a judge is approaching a place for the two-fold purpose of taking to himself as his wife one to whom he is betrothed, and also of sitting in judgment at the trial of criminals confined in prison. We can easily imagine that he might wish the nuptials to be first celebrated without previous advertisement, though afterwards open proclamation would be made of the fact that he is about to ascend the tribunal to pronounce sentence upon the guilty; and yet there would be but one coming. Again, to use the figure of another parable uttered by our

Lord, let us suppose that the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, commanded his ten servants first to meet him that he might bestow upon them the rewards of their fidelity, and then advanced with them in his train to slay the enemies who would not that he should reign over them. Here there would be a pause in the progress of his journey sufficiently long to arrange in his kingdom the several stations of his followers and friends, but there would be only one coming.

These illustrations may show that there are not two comings implied when it is said that Christ will appear *for* His saints, and then appear *with* them. There is no contradiction in such language to the statement that He is to come only once again at the end of the age: but that it is in strict accordance with the teachings of Scripture may be easily proved. As far back as the time of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, the world heard the thrilling announcement from the man who walked with God, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand [literally, myriads] of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which

ungodly sinners have spoken against him," (Jude 14, 15). Lange says the term "saints" as here used, "denotes not only angels, but also the elect from among men," and other passages in which the word is used conclusively establish his exposition. Thus in a glowing prediction of the descent of Christ to the judgment of all nations gathered against Jerusalem to battle, it is said, "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," [or with Him]. So the apostle in writing to the Thessalonians comforts them concerning their dead by saying, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring with him*," (1 Thess. iv: 14). In other words, when God bringeth the first-begotten again into the world, no longer as the man of sorrows, but as the Prince of the kings of the earth, all who have been put to sleep upon His bosom shall be brought with Him. Hence the same apostle prays for the increased manifestation of the Lord's favor to his brethren in Thessalonica, "To the end," he says, "he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all his saints*," (1 Thess. iii: 13). Again he writes to the Colossians, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also

appear with him in glory," (Col. iii: 5). Once more, when the prophet saw heaven opened, and the King of kings riding forth for the overthrow of Antichrist and his assembled hosts, it is added, "the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," (Rev. xix: 14); and in the same chapter we are told, that "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," while in the seventeenth chapter where the same scene is described, those who are with the Lamb when He overcomes Antichrist, are represented as "called, and chosen, and faithful." These are terms never applied to angels, but only, as Lange says, to the elect from among men.

Without quoting other similar passages at present, enough has been said to show that when Christ comes again in person to the earth, the saints who have been redeemed by His precious blood through faith in His name will appear with Him, and if they appear with him, they must have been previously caught up to meet him in the air, before His actual manifestation on the earth. With regard to the question, often raised, whether the entire number of those who have trusted in Jesus alone for salvation since Adam's day will rise to meet Him in the air, and then return with Him to the earth at the

inauguration of His millennial kingdom, we read such statements as the following: "*all* the saints with him;" "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with *all* the saints;" "the dead in Christ shall rise first;" "they that are Christ's at his coming;" "we shall *all* be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." This testimony is, of course, conclusive upon the point now in hand that at the second appearing or revelation of Christ here below, all who have been put to sleep by Him, as well as all who are living in fellowship with Him at the resurrection of the saints, shall appear as His beloved companions, and take part with him in the judgments to be inflicted upon His enemies. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi: 2, 3). So our Lord says to the apostles, "ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Matt. xix: 28). Again He says, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve

tribes of Israel," (Luke xxii: 29, 30). Again, "he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the Morning Star," (Rev. ii: 26–28).

It is plain, therefore, that the apostles and saints will be associated with Christ in the judgment and rule of Israel and the nations, and hence it will be clearly seen, they must be previously caught up to Christ before His glorious revelation on the earth. Now it is this coming of the Lord *for* His saints that is the proper object of Christian hope, and between which and the present moment, it may be boldly affirmed there is no predicted event which must necessarily occur before He calls them out of the world to gather around His own blessed person. After their "gathering together unto him," amid bridal joys, "to the marriage supper of the Lamb," and previous to their descent with Him in the sight of men, certain predictions will be fulfilled with regard to Israel and the world at large, but the duration of this interval is not revealed in the Scriptures. It need not be long, for events in these last days move with rail-road speed. A

few years ago Chicago was burned to the ground, and many of the wisest business men confidently predicted that it could never be rebuilt. The most hopeful thought that in ten years it might be partially restored; but in two years one of the most splendid cities on the globe rose from the ruins, leaving scarcely a mark of the devouring flames. We only know that after the translation of the saints there will be a short period of unparalleled wickedness culminating in the Antichrist, and of unparalleled tribulation culminating in terrific judgments inflicted by the true Christ, from all of which sincere Christians who love His appearing shall be delivered by being taken up into His royal pavilion; as it is written, "thy dead shall live, my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain," (Isaiah xxvi: 19–21).

While, therefore, "the coming of Christ" is a

general expression which may be made to cover the whole of the momentous events attending and following the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth, yet for the sake of accuracy it would be well to distinguish between His "coming" and His "appearing," confining the former to that particular aspect of His advent which relates to the deliverance of His people from the world; and using the Scriptural phrase, "the day of the Lord," in order to describe that aspect of it which relates to the judgment of the living nations. The early disciples were not taught to look for signs and wonders, but having known the living and true God, "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i: 10). Such was the simple, but sublime attitude of soul to which they were led by faith in the promise of their Lord, who had said, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself," (John xiv: 3); and by remembering the words of the two men in white apparel at His ascension, "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," (Acts i: 11). From that moment His coming became the inspiring theme of their constant discourse, and the

attractive object of their earnest expectation. We find the Corinthians exhibiting the crowning grace of the Spirit in "waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i: 7); and the Thessalonians assuaging their grief for their dead with the sweet assurance, "that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep," (1 Thess. iv: 15); and the Hebrews cheered with the prediction, "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," (Heb. x: 37); and those to whom James wrote armed for the conflicts of life by the exhortation, "be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord," (James v: 7); and the little children, whom John addressed, animated to "abide in him" by the tender appeal, "that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming," (1 John ii: 28).

These passages are quoted merely as examples of the way in which the phrase, "the coming of the Lord" is employed in the New Testament in addressing Christians, while the phrase, "the day of the Lord" was necessarily associated in their minds, from the teachings of the Old Testament, with scenes of judgment and terror. Thus we read, "the day of the Lord of hosts

shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up—and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day," (Isaiah ii: 12–17). "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed. one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity: and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir," (Isaiah xiii: 6–12). "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is

therein: the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. . . . For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion," (Isaiah xxxiv: 1–8).

So Jeremiah says, "This is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge him of His adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood," (Jer. xlvi: 10). Ezekiel writes, "Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Wo worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen," (Ezek. xxx: 2, 3). Joel writes, "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come," (Joel i: 15). "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and

sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains," (Joel ii: 1, 2). "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come," (Joel ii: 30, 31). "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel," (Joel iii; 11–16).

Amos writes, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos v: 18–20). Obadiah writes, "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy rewards shall return upon thine own head," (Obad. 15). Zephaniah writes, "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers," (Zeph. i: 14–16). Zechariah writes, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of

the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives—and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee," (Zech. xiv: 1–5). Malachi writes, "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. . . . Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," (Mal. iv: 1–5).

These quotations are given at some length to show that the inspired writers of the Old Testament uniformly employed the phrase, "the day of the Lord," to describe that aspect of Christ's second coming which is terrible to his foes, because it reveals the arm of Jehovah uplifted in avenging wrath. This will help us to understand the use of the same phrase in the New Testament, where in accordance with prophetic language it is sometimes made to include the entire period of God's judicial dealings with men, from the manifestation of Christ to inflict judgments upon the living nations, down

to the judgment of the great white throne at the close of the Millennium. Thus we find the apostle Peter saying, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," (2 Pet. iii: 10). So the apostle Paul writes, "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they [not you] shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape," (1 Thess. v: 2, 3). The coming of that day as a thief in the night, which implies unexpectedness, surprise, perils, and loss, will not be because there are no signs of its approach, but because the signs will be unheeded by an unbelieving world rushing headlong in its mad career to swift and certain ruin. The coming of Christ as it respects the translation of his waiting church will be unannounced by signs, but the day of the Lord as it respects the overthrow of the ungodly will be ushered in by portents of awful significance if there were faith to see them. The former is *for* the saints who are taught to expect a secret rapture at the descent of the Lord into the air; and the latter is

with the saints amid scenes of visible glory, and accompaniments of peerless magnificence.

In an instructive and interesting portion of Scripture, both the coming of Christ and the day of the Lord are brought together in immediate connection, and in the sense which distinguishes the passages already cited. "Now we beseech you, brethren" writes the apostle, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand," [is present, or has arrived] (2 Thess. ii: 2, 3). All the critics, upon the authority of the best manuscripts, tell us that the proper reading here is the day of the *Lord*, instead of the day of Christ; but without dwelling upon this, the reader is asked to observe that the powerful motive which is urged upon the Thessalonians to quiet their agitation about the false report that the day of the Lord had arrived, is the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him. It is as if the inspired writer would rebuke their unworthy fears by reminding them that the day of the Lord could not arrive in its terror, until the coming of the Lord *for* them, and their gathering together unto Him, when, according to the testimony of the first

epistle, they would be caught up with the risen dead in the clouds to meet Him in the air. After they were thus caught up, that man of sin would be revealed, the son of perdition; "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God;" but they had nothing to do with him, nor with the times in which he bears sway over the world, for they would be gathered together unto Christ, far removed from the flood of iniquity which shall then cover the earth.

If it be asked whether the translation of the saints at the coming of Christ previous to the day of the Lord would not produce a profound and lasting impression upon the world, and thus prepare men to believe the Gospel, it is sufficient to reply that no power save that of the Holy Ghost produces such an impression. It is not extravagant to assert that if one of the redeemed from heaven should come back to an assembly of sinners on earth, and tell them of celestial glory with a voice attuned to the music of angels, while his countenance glowed with the reflected splendors of the eternal throne; and if his entreaty should be followed by the terrific admonition of a shrieking fiend from hell whose hair was ablaze with the fires of perdition, not a

soul would be converted except by the manifested energy of the Spirit leading it to believe in Jesus as revealed in the word. Human nature is too dead in trespasses and sins to be quickened into life by any occurrence however thrilling, by any miracle however stupendous. Men are continually flattering themselves with the delusive expectation that some extraordinary providence will break the spell of the world, and force them, as it were, to believe and be saved, but they should remember the solemn words of the Saviour, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead," (Luke xvi: 31). The sudden and mysterious absence of the saints from the busy scenes of earth will probably point many a jest in the local columns of the secular journals, or at best it will prove a nine day's wonder, and then the pleasure seeking multitude, relieved of those whose very presence was a check upon their desires, will rush more frantically into every excess of iniquity, and shout even amid the thunders of the coming storm,

"On with the dance! let joy be unconfined."

There are many earnest pre-millennialists who object to the position here taken, and insist that there is a scarcely perceptible interval between the coming of Christ *for* the saints and his

coming *with* them. They refer among other passages to the apostle's declaration that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," and argue with some plausibility that such language forbids the thought of a secret translation of believers previous to the appearing of the Lord in visible glory on the earth. They say that the shout, the voice, and the trump must be heard by all, and hence that we need not look for the Saviour until the manifestation of the Antichrist, and the fulfillment of certain prophecies which, every one admits, await the startling events of the future. It is of unspeakable moment to the Christian to know whether he shall be exposed to the dreadful sufferings and temptations that will mark the close of the present age, or whether he shall be removed to the heavenly heights, and look down with undisturbed composure upon the tempest of judgments that will lay waste an ungodly world before the establishment of righteousness. Let us approach the examination of the question with hearts submissive to the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures, and with a sincere desire to know the truth as there revealed.

There is a principle which the Almighty has observed in all the dispensations, and which is

faintly shadowed forth in the opening verse of the Bible, where we read the sublime statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He created both, He has a right to both, He lays claim to both, and in due time He will make that claim good to the utter confusion of His enemies, and to the everlasting joy of the holy intelligences of the universe. The principle that He asserts and intends to maintain His claim both to heaven and earth is thus quietly announced in the first sentence which the inspired penman wrote, just as there can be no reasonable doubt that the doctrine of the Trinity is intimated in the fact that the word translated "God" is in the original in the plural, while the word translated "created" is in the singular number. This remarkable fact is not owing to any peculiarity in the Hebrew language, for it can describe God as easily by a word in the singular as in the plural; but a singular verb is joined to a plural noun for the express purpose of teaching the great truth of Trinity in unity, which is brought out a little more fully at the creation of Adam when God said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over

every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," (Gen. i: 26).

Here, then, man was invested with the sovereignty of the earth, and his place and portion were to be on it, while God, in the second person of the Trinity, came down, and manifested His presence and glory amid the beautiful scenes which He pronounced to be very good, and walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and communed with Adam as friend talketh with a friend. But sin entered and marred the fair face of creation, and disturbed the rest of the Creator, and introduced disaster and death where all had been love and life. Cain, as the type of the legalism and self-righteousness which have formed the religion of the world ever since, finding his offering of fruits and flowers rejected, turned with rage upon his brother standing beside a bloody altar, as the type of those who through faith in Jesus are justified from all things; and then the earth opened her mouth to receive more precious blood than that of the lamb, and it cried unto God from the ground. The earth thus polluted was no longer fit for the manifestation of Jehovah's presence, and the human race was divided into two distinct families, one of which clung to the world as its heritage, and the other of which was separated

from the world to be a peculiar people. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and he and his descendants built cities, and invented musical instruments, and worked in brass and iron, and tried to repair the ruins of the fall by human skill, and sought to render the only habitation for which they cared delightful; but Seth and his descendants called upon the name of the Lord, and left no memorial of earthly achievements, and wrought no works that could enhance their reputation in the eyes of an unbelieving world, though of one of them we have the brief and touching record, "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him," (Gen. v: 24).

Let it be remembered that the translation of Enoch occurred when Jehovah was about to assert again His forgotten and despised claim to the earth, and when to make good that claim He was determined to purge it of its corruptions by the judgment of the deluge. When this was done, He gave Noah, whom He found to be righteous before Him, dominion over it as He had given Adam previous to the introduction of evil. We behold, then, Enoch who was translated before the judgment descended; Noah and his house who were preserved through the judgment: and a large class upon whom the judgment fell.

Have we not in these first chapters of the Bible a recital of the divine purpose to take the church away before the desolating judgments shall descend at the close of the present dispensation, and also to preserve a people in the midst of the fearful exhibitions of God's wrath, and finally to pour the tide of His fury upon the world at large? Surely the supposition is not improbable when we recall the fact that the judgment of the deluge and the judgments that shall soon terminate our age, are more than once mentioned in direct connection by Christ and the apostles, who make one the type of the other. At all events it is certain that when God gives His people dominion in the earth He prepares the way by the Spirit of judgment, and until the scene of man's wickedness is cleansed by the hand of justice that He may reveal Himself in His unsullied holiness and untarnished glory, He calls them to a life of separation as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Thus as Adam was invested with the sovereignty of the earth before the fall, so was Noah after the deluge; but the former believed the devil's lie rather than God's truth, and the latter got drunk. Man has turned out a wretched failure wherever tried, for notwithstanding the terrible punishment that had fallen upon the

world at the flood, we find the race in the arrogancy of the human heart proposing to build a city, and a tower whose top was to reach unto heaven, that they might make themselves a name, and act independently of God. Such was man's attempt to establish himself in the earth, and as evil was again in the ascendency, we hear God's call to Abram to come out from the world and to find his place and portion in heaven. This faithful servant had not so much of earth as to set his foot on, but was all his life time a man of the tent and the altar, "for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," (Heb. xi : 10).

But again does Jehovah assert His claim to the earth, and again He clears the scene where He intends to manifest His presence by the most terrific judgments. He selected the Hebrews as His witnesses in the world, and the land of Canaan for their habitation ; and in accomplishing His sovereign will, He assumed a title suitable to His design, as He always did when appearing under a new name at any special manifestation of Himself; and nothing can be more instructive and interesting than to trace the reason for these different names, as they occur along the track of revelation. For example, we may be sure it was not without good reason the Holy Ghost used the

word *God* thirty-two times in the first chapter of the Bible, and the words *Lord God* in the second chapter, when man came upon the scene. It would be out of place to dwell upon this now, but for the present purpose it is sufficient to notice that when the Israelites crossed the river Jordan to take possession of the land of promise, Joshua said, "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan," (Josh iii: 11). It was as *Lord of all the earth* He was manifesting himself to His people among whom He deigned to dwell, and therefore He acted in judgment by the sword which was to exterminate the old inhabitants, and not to spare for their crying. When Jericho was taken, "they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword," (Josh. vi: 21); and a curse was pronounced against the man who should rise up to rebuild the city. When Ai was taken, "Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants," (Josh. viii: 26); and in fighting with the Amorites, "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies," (Josh. x: 13); for God was dealing in righteous judgment, and

the land must be cleansed before He could reveal His presence in it as the Lord of all the earth.

From that time until their rejection, the Israelites were charged to maintain the authority of God in the earth, and were therefore regarded and treated as an earthly people. Of course it is not meant that they did not receive spiritual blessings, but their special calling nationally was to act as witnesses for God on earth, and hence the promises and threatenings addressed to them were to a large extent earthly in their character. On the one hand they were encouraged to obedience by the assurance of long life, of vigorous health, of a numerous offspring, of fertilizing showers, of abundant harvests, and of an easy victory over their enemies; and on the other hand they were warned against disobedience by the fear of pestilence and plague, drought and famine, suffering and subjugation by their foes. Is there anything of this in the New Testament? Not a shadow. It is indeed directly the reverse, for in proportion to our fidelity, and closeness of conformity to the will and word of God, will we know in our own experience the meaning of the language, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," (Phil. i: 29); and the friendship of the world has never been purchased

by a Christian, except at the price of disloyalty to his Lord. We are plainly told that we must expect to be reviled and slandered, that the world will hate us, that in the world we shall have tribulation, that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom, that we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together, and that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; but instead of exacting an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, as under the former dispensation, we are repeatedly charged to abstain from retaliation, to harbor no thought of revenge, to overcome evil with good, and to face the insults and injuries to which we are exposed with meek endurance.

The reason for this complete change in the tone of the communications addressed to the people of God, when we leave the Old Testament to come into the New, will be apparent, if we recollect, that Christians are living in an entirely different dispensation. In the one, God was asserting His claim to the earth; in the other, He is taking the church out of the world to form the body and bride of the Son of His love. In the one, the earth was the prominent thought before the divine mind; in the other, heaven is the

place to be enriched by the displays of redeeming grace. In the one, therefore, Israel received an earthly calling, but in the other, the church has a heavenly calling, as it is written, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," (Heb. iii: 1); and God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," (Eph. i: 3); and "our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," (Phil. iii: 20). Thus also we are distinctly taught that God "created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God," (Eph. iii: 10). The church then, is the great lesson book which the principalities and powers in heavenly places are continually studying, and out of which they learn more of the manifold wisdom of God than from the entire range of the universe, while the special calling of Israel was to teach this manifold wisdom to the nations of the earth. If we forget the distinction between an earthly and heavenly people, or in other words, if we lose sight of dispensational truth, where every thing is beautiful and well-ordered in its season, we will be thrown into inextricable

confusion in attempting to understand the Scriptures.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and since the creation of man He has alternately revealed His purpose to declare the glory of His grace in both departments of His magnificent empire. But where sin has polluted the theatre of its display He always prepares the way of its manifestation by judgment, even if the judgment must fall, as it did when He brought in the new dispensation, upon the head of His only begotten and well-beloved Son. The second coming of that Son, therefore, must inevitably be ushered in by judgment, and independently of explicit testimony, we might argue from analogy that a heavenly people, the church, would be preserved *from* it like Enoch; and that an earthly people, the faithful remnant among the Israelites would be preserved *through* it, like Noah; while the ungodly who have despised His love would be overwhelmed *by* it, like the Antediluvian world. There is to be a coming of the Lord *for* the saints, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and after an interval, in which human wickedness will reach the loftiest height of iniquity, there is to

be a coming of the Lord *with* the saints for the overthrow of the nations gathered about Jerusalem, and for the re-establishment of Israel in the place of testimony and of honor on the earth.

Nor is there any real force in the objection that the shout and voice and trump accompanying the descent of the Lord into the air precludes the possibility of a secret translation of the saints previous to His appearing in the sight of all men. Such sounds as these are only for a heavenly ear, and divine glory is only for a heavenly eye, or for the soul prepared by grace to hear and to behold what God hath prepared for them that love him. There is no evidence that the translation of Enoch produced the slightest impression upon the unbelieving world, or that there was any preliminary sign announcing the time of its occurrence, or that it was witnessed by a single human being. In the translation of Elijah we know that he passed over the river Jordan from the presence even of the sons of the prophets, and taking only Elisha with him who was his successor, suddenly there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, and the sons of the prophets sought three days, and found him not.

When the servant of Elisha was greatly alarmed because the city in which he and his master sojourned was compassed by enemies, his eyes were opened, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha, but neither the inhabitants of Dothan nor the Syrians saw them. When Daniel was upon the banks of the river Hiddekel he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body was also like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like a voice of a multitude. But it is added, "I Daniel, alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves," (Dan. x: 7).

Coming now to New Testament times we find that the glory which shone upon the holy mount at the transfiguration was seen only by Peter and James and John, though as it was evidently manifested in the night, it might have filled the land with its dazzling radiance. So at a later period in the ministry of our Lord, His soul seemed to recoil for a moment from the unfathomable gulf of woe opening at His feet, and He exclaimed, "Now is my soul troubled; and

what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered," (John xii: 28, 29). What to Him in His habitual communion with the Father was the articulate utterance of love, was to their uncircumcised ears only as the rumbling of distant thunder. Still later in His wonderful career, no human eye saw His resurrection from the grave, and only to His chosen disciples did He appear after that memorable event. Stephen, at his martyrdom, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," (Acts vii: 55); but no others beheld this blessed vision. Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus was smitten to the ground by a great light flashing from heaven, and he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? "And they that were with me," he says, "saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me," (Acts xxii: 9). The same Saul after his conversion was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words,

but no man tracked his flight to the Paradise of God.

These facts gathered from the Scriptures are sufficient to show that the Lord reveals precious secrets to His own chosen servants, of which the world knows nothing, and that the shout, and voice, and trump attending the coming of Christ for the saints, may not even be heard, much less understood by those who are locked fast in the slumber of spiritual insensibility. But whatever difficulties may surround the subject, there are two classes of texts found in the Bible which will satisfy the mind that is subject to its authority. One class holds forth the second advent as the object of immediate expectation and desire, without the necessary intervention of any occurrence whatever after the ascension of the Saviour to heaven; and the other class predicts such events as the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the culmination of the world's ungodliness in the Antichrist previous to the return of Jesus to the earth. One class speaks of His return *for* the saints, and the other of His return *with* the saints. One class refers to the coming of Christ as it relates to the full redemption of His waiting people, and the other, to the day of the Lord as it relates to the period when He shall reign personally and judicially upon

the throne of David, and upon His kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice. When, therefore, the apostle Peter writes of the day of the Lord as the time in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, it is obvious that he alludes to the close of the day at the end of the millennium instead of the events that shall occur at its commencement. That this is the correct view will appear to all when we remember that immediately following the fearful conflagration of which Peter speaks, there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and that in the only other passage in the New Testament where this form of expression occurs John tells us that he saw "a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea," (Rev. xxi: 1). That the sea here is to be understood literally there can be no doubt, for two verses before it is said, "the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [or hades] delivered up the dead which were in them," (Rev. xx: 23); and as we know there will be a sea during the millennium, the new heavens and the new earth which Peter

mentions as succeeding the destruction of the old by fire will not appear until the close of the millennium, and at the beginning of the eternal state.

"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," (2 Pet. iii: 8); and the day of the Lord is that long period ushered in by judgments and closed by judgments, when Christ reigning personally over the earth shall bring it back into harmony with heaven according to the original purpose and plan of creation; and "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power," (1 Cor. xv: 24). It is obvious therefore that believers have nothing to fear from that day, either at its dreadful commencement or its more dreadful conclusion, for if true Christians, they will keep in mind continually the Saviour's solemn admonition, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that

shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man," (Luke xxi: 34–36). Those that love His appearing shall escape all these things by being caught up to meet Him in the air, and it comforts our hearts to know that He will come *for* His people, before He comes *with* them. The time of His coming for them may be just at hand, "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch," (Mark xiii: 34–37).

This earnest and repeated call to watchfulness not only warns against indifference with regard to the great truth of our Lord's second advent, but it plainly intimates the possibility of His descent from the right hand of the Father at any hour. Owing, however, to the prevalent error which postpones His return for a thousand years, most Christians of the present day utterly fail to heed His solemn injunction, and in fact unite with the scoffers of the world in sneering at the few who watch as fanatics. If a thousand years

must certainly elapse before He can leave His seat in the heavens, or if a series of predicted events must necessarily occur before His shout can be heard in the air, then indeed it is worse than idle to watch for Him, for error is always positively injurious to the soul. There is no way, therefore, of harmonizing the multitude of Scriptural admonitions to the Christian, to be constantly on the watch, at even, at midnight, at the cockcrowing, in the morning, with the multitude of Scriptural prophecies, equally explicit, concerning the Jews and the judgments of the last days, that remain to be fulfilled, except by seeing that Christ comes *for* His people before He appears *with* them. Hence the last chapter of the Old Testament describes His *appearing* as the Sun of Righteousness, which must be seen by all; but the last chapter of the New Testament describes His *coming* as the Morning Star which can be discerned only by those who wait and watch through the weary hours of the night. Hence too, the last chapter of the Old Testament appropriately closes with the word "curse;" but the last chapter of the New Testament appropriately closes with the word "grace." All this is deeply significant, for it indicates that while the curse is still resting upon afflicted Israel and a groaning creation, "The Sun of Righteousness

shall arise with healing in his wings;" but His appearing will be heralded by His coming in grace as the Morning Star, ushering in the day without a cloud.

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together," (Luke xvii: 34–37). Although our Lord with His followers, however unlettered, moves on a plane of truth infinitely above modern science of which man is so proud, yet here He evidently anticipates the discoveries of modern science that demonstrate the spherical form of the earth, and refers to His coming as producing its practical and tremendous results in the separation of believers from unbelievers at different hours of the day, on account of the roundness of our globe. At one place it will be even, at another place midnight, at another place the cockcrowing, at another place morning; or as in the passage just quoted, in one part of the world two men

will be asleep together at the time for slumber; in another part two women will be preparing the morning meal; in another part, still further east, two men will be engaged in the busy toil of the day, when one shall be taken, mounting up with wings as an eagle to meet the Lord in the air, and the other shall be left to the deluge of wrath that will break in successive waves of desolation over apostate Christendom.

Oh, what rapture shall thrill the hearts of the redeemed, what ecstasy of bliss shall ravish the sorrowing, tempted, troubled disciples of Jesus, when responding to His shout that will sound to the world only as a strange clap of thunder, they shall in the twinkling of an eye be changed into the likeness of His glorious body, and together with the risen saints, hand in hand with some whose graves have cast a shadow all along their pathway of life, they shall ascend to be with Him forever, and to be done with sin and suffering forever! But what amazement and horror must seize upon the careless, the unbelieving, the worldly, when the husband shall miss from his side the wife who had wept bitter tears over his rejection of her Saviour, and the child shall look around in vain for the mother whose entreaties had been disregarded, and the friends who mingled their

sympathies shall silently and suddenly part to meet no more!

"What horrors shall roll o'er the Godless soul,
Waked from its death-like sleep;
Of all hope bereft, and to Judgment left,
Forever to wail and weep!

O worldling, give ear, while the saints are near!
Soon must the tie be riven,
And men, side by side, God's hand shall divide,
As far as hell's depths from heaven.

Some husband, whose head was laid on his bed,
Throbbing with mad excess,
Awakes from that dream, by the lightning's gleam,
Alone in his last distress:

For the patient wife, who through each day's life
Watched and wept for his soul,
Is taken away, and no more shall pray—
For the judgment thunders roll!

The children of day are summoned away:
Left are the children of night—
Sealed is their doom, for there's no more room:
Filled are the mansions of light!"

It may be well before closing briefly to recapitulate. After showing the importance of the subject, it was proved that in the New Testament the coming of Christ is *always* to be understood literally, and that it is a gross and dangerous perversion of Scripture to refer it to

the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, to death, or to any other event whatever. This was followed by the confession of the leading post-millennial Expositors, who acknowledge that the first Christians looked for the personal return of the Lord Jesus in their day, but think it is fanatical to look for Him now, or for a thousand years still in the future. Then the prominence of the doctrine was exhibited, set forth as it is in one verse out of every twenty-five, or as some who have examined the subject very closely say, one verse out of every thirteen in the New Testament, and in the Old Testament mentioned scores of times as often as the distinct assertions of His first coming; and it was urged that the total silence generally observed concerning this great and leading truth, as if it were a forbidden topic, can not be right or pleasing to the Holy Ghost. The Scriptural use of the doctrine was next illustrated, and it was seen that the inspired writers employ it to meet and comfort, and guide, and sanctify, and strengthen the believer, at every step of his toilsome and often sorrowful journey, from the cross to the crown. Thus the central thought of the book was reached, and it was made manifest that not only is there no hint in the New Testament of a millennium until Christ comes, and

not only is there no hint of it in the Old Testament except as it shall be ushered in by appalling judgments at His personal appearing, but instead of the fancied progress and universal power of the church, both the church and the world are hurrying forward to a darker, deeper night than ever known in the past. There is no such thing as the bride reigning without the Bridegroom, in whom alone she has her portion. This was succeeded by a brief history of the doctrine, to show that for the first three hundred years it was the faith of Christians, but as Bengel says, "When Christianity became a worldly power, the hope of the future was weakened by the joy over the present success." Auberlien adds in stronger language, "When the Church became a harlot, she ceased to be a bride who goes to meet her bridegroom; and thus Chiliasm necessarily disappeared." The Commentary of which Dr. David Brown is one of the Editors, quotes both remarks with warm approval.

Then came a chapter to awaken attention to the practical power of the doctrine in the life of the believer, not when he coldly receives it as a mere dogma of Theology, not when he studies it with idle or intellectual curiosity, not when he watches "times and seasons" with which he has nothing to do, but when it is carried home to his

heart in the power of the Holy Ghost, snapping the link that bound him to the world, causing him to walk in close and constant communion with his Lord, and teaching him to be daily "looking for that blessed hope." The discussion with regard to the return of the Jews was somewhat protracted, because acquaintance with this truth is absolutely essential to a knowledge of the word of God and to the entire subject of our Lord's second advent. It was noticed that God began to reckon time from the redemption of Israel by blood out of Egyptian bondage, for "this month," He said, "shall be unto you the beginning of months," (Ex. xii : 2) ; and that He does not count time except as His earthly people are in covenant relation to Himself. Hence when they crowned their long career of disobedience with the stupendous crime of crucifying His eternal Son, they were scattered abroad ; and there commenced on the day of Pentecost a dateless, timeless period or parenthesis, during which the Holy Ghost is gathering out from all nations the elect, who are to be the body and bride of Christ, one with the risen Head, constituting His fulness, and essential to His mediatorial completeness.

But when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, Israel will be restored, and, as of old, amid

the accompaniments of dreadful judgments that attended their deliverance from Egypt, some of which we learn in the book of Revelation will be repeated. Blessed be God, before the judgments of the seals, the trumpets, and the vials begin, the saints who sleep in Jesus will arise, and those remaining who are really born again will be caught away to meet him in the air, as we learn from the same book of Revelation; for He has promised to the faithful, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," (Rev. iii: 10); while of the hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel who were sealed, and of the great multitude that believed their testimony, it is said, "These are they which came out of the great tribulation," (Rev. vii: 14). To the one He comes as the Morning Star, and this is the hope of the Church; to the other He comes as the Sun of Righteousness, and then "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit," (Isa. xxvii: 6). As Auberlien says, "Israel is again to be at the head of all humanity. . . . The whole Old Testament is full of prophecies on this subject. They begin with the Pentateuch, and conclude with Malachi. . . . The doctrine of the future

glorious restoration of Israel is such an essential and fundamental idea of all prophecy, that the difficulty is not so much to find passages in which it is taught, as to select from the great number." The Commentary, of which Dr. David Brown is one of the authors, says, "Apostate christendom being destroyed, and the believing Church translated, there will remain Israel and the heathen, the majority of men then alive, who, not having come into contact with the Gospel, have not been guilty of rejecting it. These will be subjects of a general conversion. 'The veil' shall be taken off Israel first, then from off 'all people.' The glories attending Christ's appearing, the destruction of Antichrist, transfiguration of the Church, and binding of Satan, will prepare the nations for embracing the Gospel. As *individual* regeneration goes on now, so a 'regeneration' of *nations* then. Israel, as a nation, shall be 'born at once—in one day.' As *the Church* begins at Christ's ascension, so the *Kingdom* at His second advent. The humiliation of civilized nations will be, that nations which they despise, Jews, and barbarians, the negro descendants of Ham, under the curse of Noah, Kush, and Sheba, shall supplant them."

"When the thousand years are expired," we are told, "Satan shall be loosed out of his

prison," and a little season of revived wickedness shall ensue, about which it is not necessary to say more here than to point to the demonstration it will afford of the unchangeable evil of man's nature under the most favorable circumstances, while the flesh remains in him. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and though restrained during the millennium, it will manifest its inherent pravity at the first favorable opportunity, like a tiger long caged and curbed that will bound back to its native jungle with unquenched thirst for blood, when the iron bars are removed. But the last desperate assault of Satan will fail to accomplish his designs, for he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the antichrist and false prophet are; and after the resurrection and judgment of the unbelieving dead, eternity begins, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away," (Rev. xxi: 4).

How thrilling the thought that the first of these startling events, the coming of Christ for the saints, may occur at any hour! Upon this the Holy Ghost seeks by the most solemn appeals to stay the minds of Christians as the proper hope of the church, and the happy day with its attendant consequences to the world can

not surely be long delayed, for our Lord tells us, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world [the habitable earth] for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come," (Matt. xxiv: 14). The gospel of the kingdom, implied in the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," is now proclaimed by Missionaries nearly everywhere, giving one indication that we are living in "the last days;" and meanwhile the moanings of the gathering storm that shall burst upon apostate Christendom are heard in every direction through the deepening gloom. From Europe are wafted the forebodings of the most thoughtful and distinguished men, who see the dark shadow of heavier disasters in the near future for the suffering nations. The hollow peace that followed the recent gigantic struggle in Turkey for dominion is justly regarded as only a lull in the tempest, preceding a wilder outburst. Communism and Nihilism are threatening the foundations of the strongest thrones, and not a crowned head is safe for a day from the bullet of the assassin. In Berlin, the centre of culture, a recent petition implores the Government to arrest the rapid spread of the most debasing and heathenish vices. Meanwhile the idolized leaders of scientific investigation are engaged in a work appropriately

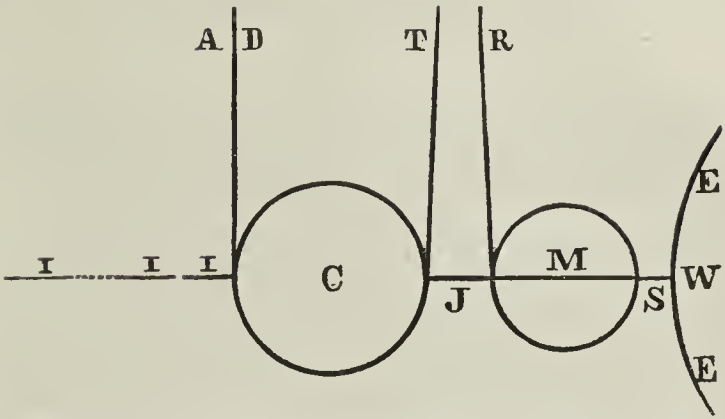
described by Archbishop Cullen as "the revival of paganism." Nay, it is worse than paganism, for while the ancient Athenians erected an altar to THE UNKNOWN GOD, these modern philosophers declare that He is THE UNKNOWABLE, and, worse still, that He does not exist. A long stride toward preparation for the reign of antichrist has been made from the deism of the last century to the blank atheism of the present, and not only on the Continent but in "Protestant England," the "cultivated thought" of the day delights to announce that there is no future state for man.

In this country the same materialistic philosophy is making frightful progress, for there seems to be an irresistable charm about the very word *science*, which ministers to the self-conceit of the human heart, and captivates thousands, even when it is nothing more than "science falsely so called," (1 Tim. vi: 20). The secular press is almost entirely under the control of "free thinkers," who are in thorough sympathy with the "free thinkers" of the pulpit. Let a preacher give utterance to skeptical views, and, no matter how great a fool he may be, he is immediately lauded to the skies, as a man of genius and courage and independence. The march of infidelity in the Church as well as out

of it is rapid, bold, defiant, trampling down the Lord's day, and opinions and customs which a few years ago were regarded as sacred. Common honesty is difficult to find, and Christians are constantly humbled into the dust by the deliberate thefts of prominent members of churches, prayer-meetings, and Sunday schools. The columns of the daily journals are so uniformly loaded with the record of crimes, they have ceased to excite surprise, or to awaken emotions of horror. The fell spirit of Socialism is gathering strength every hour, and is ready to break forth in destructive violence at the first favorable opportunity. Amid the accumulated evidences of immorality and wickedness on every hand, God has let loose civil war, floods, fires, hurricanes, famines in some sections, plagues of grasshoppers, cholera, the awful scourge of the yellow fever, pecuniary distress that has ruined thousands, and that presses hard upon the poor, increasing their bitterness; but they have only hardened the people in iniquity and steeped them in a duller insensibility. Even the virgins nod and sleep, and the Church utterly fails to discern the signs of the times. "All these are the beginning of sorrows," (Matt. xxiv: 8).

Well may we pause here, and take up the cry of the Spirit and the Bride, who in their longing

for the return of Christ, are saying to Him, "Come. And let him that heareth say, come." Then with an earnest prayer that it may please God speedily to accomplish the number of His elect, the watchful believer should turn to the lost children of men, and press upon them the tender invitation, "Let him that is athirst come, And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely, (Rev. xxii: 17). "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matt. xi: 28). "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment]; but IS passed from death unto life," (John v: 24). "By him all that believe ARE justified from ALL things," (Acts xiii: 39). "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," (Rom. iv: 5). "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation," (2 Cor. vi: 2). "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night," (Isa. xxi. 11, 12); "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus," (Rev. xxii: 20).



This simple diagram, suggested by an English tract, may assist the reader in fixing and retaining the order of events as presented in the previous discussion:

I,I,I. Represents the history of Israel up to the time of our Lord's rejection.

A,D. Represents His ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost at the beginning of the present dispensation.

C. Is the Church age, during which the Holy Ghost is gathering out of all nations the body and bride of Christ.

T. Is the translation of the risen and changed saints at the coming of the Lord for His waiting people.

J. Is the short period of terrible judgments, described in the Apocalypse, chapters vi-xix, when the Antichrist shall reign and Israel shall be taken up again.

R. Is the revelation of Christ with all His saints here on the earth.

M. Is the millennial kingdom for a thousand happy years.

S. Is Satan loosed out of his prison for a little season.

W. Is the final judgment of the dead before the great white throne.

E,E. Is Eternity.

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